



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on Thursday 26th April 2018 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield - 7.30pm

18/67. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Bull
Councillor Dave Dyson
Councillor Linda Bowen
Councillor Alan Preston
Councillor Andrea Chinery

Also in attendance:

David Finch – Essex County Council
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council
Ann Read – Village Show & Parish Path Partnership
Sophie Hyde – St Margaret's School
Paula Preston – The Green Man
Alan Preston – Neighbourhood Watch
Nick Hasler – Toppesfield Cricket Club
Trisha Roberts – Community Shop
Sally Croft – St Margaret of Antioch Parish Church
Mary-Ann Stevenson – Toppesfield Community Pub
Sheila Braithwaite – Village Hall & Petanque
Andrea Chinery – Little Chestnuts Pre-School
Maureen Dimmock – Village Hall & Community Shop
Alan Collard – Pumphouse Community Brewery & Toppesfield Charities
Zoe Hughes – Little Hedgehogs, Fit Fun Club, The Golden Chestnuts and Arts & Craft Club
Malcolm Braithwaite

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Mike James
Councillor Paul Thompson
District Councillor Richard van Dulken
Jean Bagnall

18/68. Parish Council Annual Report from the Chairman:

Andrew Bull gave his report – see attached Appendix A.

18/69. Organisations / group Reports:

Reports were received from various organisations.

David Finch gave his annual report – see Appendix B.

Trisha Roberts gave a report on behalf of the Toppesfield Cricket Club - see Appendix B.

Paula Preston – introduced herself as the Landlady of the Green Man and thanked everyone for their support so far. She also stated that they are planning lots of events for the community and hoping this will bring others in to the community.

Alan Collard gave a report on behalf of Pumphouse Community Brewery – see Appendix C.

Sheila Braithwaite gave the report for the Village Hall Committee – see Appendix D.

Sophie Hyde read out the report from the Head for St Margaret’s School – see appendix E.

Sally Croft gave the report written by Brain Moody for St Margaret of Antioch parish Church – see Appendix F.

Alan Preston gave a report regarding the Neighbourhood Watch – see Appendix G.

Alan Collard gave a report on behalf of Toppesfield Charities – see Appendix H.

Trisha Roberts gave the report for Toppesfield Community Shop – see Appendix I.

Ann Read gave the reports for the Village Show and the Parish Paths Partnership – see Appendix J.

Zoe Hughes gave reports for Little Hedgehogs Parent & Carers Toddler Group, Fit Fun Club and Golden Chestnuts – please see appendix K for these reports.

Andrea Chinery read out the report on behalf of Little Chestnuts Preschool – see Appendix L.

Sheila Braithwaite gave a report on behalf of the Petanque & Indoor Bowls– see Appendix M.

Andrew Bull read out a report from Jean Bagnall on behalf of the Tai Chi based exercise club – see appendix N.

Nick Hasler gave the report for Toppesfield Cricket Club – see Appendix O.

Dave Dyson – reported that the Doctors Car Service is still active and taking people to appointments as they arise.

Andrew Bull confirmed that the Red Barrows were quiet last year but this year one private event and 2 events at ‘Car fest’ are planned for this year. There is also a possibility they may appear at the Church Fete for the Maddi Foundation and Reptile Dysfunction continue to play and fundraise.

18/70. Time and date of next Parish Council Meeting:

The next Parish Council meeting will be on the 3rd May 2018 at 7.30pm. This will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

18/71. Close:

Before the meeting was closed a question regarding the newsletter was raised – Andrew Bull stated this has been discussed at the Parish Council meetings and it was agreed that the newsletter in its current format will be issued twice a year. Each month there will be a double-sided A4 or A5 flyer with dates/times of clubs, events etc along with some content from groups and information still needs to be sent to Andrew for publication. The cut-off date for the June issue will be mid-May. It was also suggested that a central planner be created to advertise events.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Appendix A

Chairman's Annual Parish Meeting Report

It has been another successful year for our community and I am delighted that the Parish Council continues to play a key role in this success.

The community continues to enjoy some great facilities with the addition this year of a defibrillator located in the telephone box opposite the pump in the centre of Toppesfield, a valued asset but hopefully it will not be needed to used.

The Parish Council supported the now traditional Christmas Lighting Up Ceremony which again was very well attended. The tree looked fantastic and we again thank Shaun and Bridget Sheldrake for the co-ordination of this event. We will seek to improve, as always for 2018. This year are Christmas celebrations included a Christmas lunch for the older folk in our community. Thanks go to Councillor Preston who took the lead on this project and to all those who donated and volunteered to make this happen. Thanks also go to St Margaret's School who joined in to sing to our guests, this was a very pleasant addition to the day.

During the year the parish council also financed the cleaning, repair and repainting of the 5 set of parish gates and new entrance gates for the village hall.

Our finances were well managed throughout the year, enabling us to make a substantial grant to St Margaret's Church and a grant to the pavilion to enable the purchase of a folding table and chairs. The Council also supported the Redbarrow's Charity event in September. This was all possible through sound prudent finance management from all councillors and Kaaren Berry our responsible financial officer. We will continue to seek to review our operational expenditure for the new financial year to see where we can make efficiencies and look to spend more on improving the services and facilities within our community.

Appendix B

David Finch – Essex County Council – The Leader's Annual Report.

Essex is a great county, from towns inside the M25 to coastal villages looking out to Suffolk. We have vibrant urban centres, international ports and airports, universities and world class firms, alongside beautiful rural countryside and the longest coastline in England.

I am passionate about better lives for people in Essex and believe prosperity is the best route to achieve that – so people can help each other, and themselves. Essex County Council is also ready to step in – to protect vulnerable children, to help care for older people and to support our economy to flourish.

As a public body it is important we spend taxpayers' money wisely, on the issues that matter to our residents. To offset reductions in government funding, we must constantly manage demand, reshape and re-imagine services and look for opportunities to generate income. It is also important we work tirelessly to secure investment into the county that can help make Essex an even better place to live and work.

Our role is changing. The digital revolution opens up new opportunities for how services are delivered and how residents access information and choices. Increasingly our job is to create opportunities for people and communities to choose and act themselves, rather than to simply deliver services over which the public has no say.

This annual report sets out some key achievements over the last year, our areas of focus over the next four years and some important financial information.

Key Achievements of 2017/2018

- 94% of Essex schools were judged good or outstanding – three points higher than the national average.
- We helped 1,330 young people not in education, employment or training to move into employment or learning.
- We gave substantial business support to 22 firms resulting in about £2.3m finance raised and multiple new products brought to market.
- We've resurfaced over 400 miles of roads – nearly 4 times round the M25 – and filled in 5,000 potholes.
- Reduced the number of delayed transfers of care due to social care to an average of 1,100 days per month.
- Commissioned an independent review into ECC owned property following the Grenfell Fire.
- Continued to invest in our country parks which has increase visitor numbers by 7.5% to almost three qtrs. of a million.
- Supported the creation of 11,370 apprenticeships in the county, and we'll continue to invest to ensure our economy has the skills it needs to thrive.
- Promoted activities and delivered services which helped reduce that amount of household waste over the last 12 months by 32kg per household.
- Begun construction work on 64 housing units – 41 units for private sale and 23 for independent living for people with learning difficulties.

Opportunities for Community Funding

During 2017/2018 I launched three separate initiatives that give local communities access to funding to make improvements in their local area:

- **The Local Connections fund** - £500,000 committed to support community-led activity, using a crowdfunding platform known as The Essex Crowd Movement. Depending on the number of individual pledged (min. £2), ECC will match the fundraising efforts of qualifying projects up to the value of £5,000.
- **The Local Services Fund** - £500,000 to support more formal, traditional services by being more locally responsive and to improve local places. The fund is being administered by the Essex Association of Local Councils who publicise the fund to parish councils, housing associations, and other formally constituted local groups.
- **The Essex Lottery** – the lottery is open to anybody aged 16 or over who is physically based in Essex. Tickets cost £1 and the Jackpot can be £250,000.

The Local Connections Fund

The Local Connections Fund is run via the Essex Crowd (<https://www.spacehive.com/movement/theessexcrowd>), an online crowdfunding platform. This digital approach is designed to make it easier for more people to share and fund projects that would make their neighbourhoods better still. Essex County Council has committed over £500,000 to help back these ideas – with a maximum per project of £5,000.

There is no formal application cycle; people can upload their ideas when they have them, although individual crowdfunding campaigns will typically be no more than three months in duration.

Ideas come from local people, backed by individual and organisational financial and in-kind support. The Essex Crowd offers ECC the opportunity to back locally-popular projects that can make a difference – e.g. local creches; community festivals and events; or Christmas lights.

The current number of schemes in the crowdfunding pipeline number twenty-five at the 'idea' stage and two actually fundraising.

In time, the hope is that a number of different agencies will support projects including Essex districts and Clinical Commissioning Groups aligning funding to help projects.

The Local Services Fund

The Local Services Fund (<http://www.ealc.gov.uk/local-services-fund>) is administered by the Essex Association of Local Councils on ECC's behalf. It offers revenue funding, providing formally constituted groups with the opportunity to submit proposals for localised services, capped at a maximum of £10,000 for a single year project or £5,000 for three-year schemes.

The Fund allows local organisations to decide on service mix in their area – a different, more localised way of working. Match funding to see locally-appropriate activity - e.g. verge maintenance; community café offer; a community handyman; or a 'men's shed' service.

In the next and future rounds of funding, applicants will ne required to seek endorsement from their local County Councillor before submitting an application. If this endorsement is not forthcoming, the application will not be considered.

A formal panel will meet on a twice-yearly basis and there is an expectation that the ECC contribution will be match funded by the bidding organisation.

The Essex Lottery

The Essex Lottery is an exciting weekly lottery which has been set up the Essex County Council to give local charities and good causes an easy and effective way to raise extra funds. In total 60p from evry £1 ticket sale goes to the good causes – more than double the National Lottery.

So far over 253 charities and good causes from right across the county of Essex have signed up to benefit from the lottery and almost 3000 tickets have been sold. Tickets are available from www.essexlottery.co.uk

Our Budget for 2018/19

We have set high ambitions for Essex and for Essex County Council in the face of a difficult financial context and the Council has a strong record of sound financial management, focusing on providing efficient services that matter to residents.

We have a legal responsibility to operate within a balanced budget. With the changes and reduction in grant funding, coupled with increasing and more complex demand for services like caring for the elderly, protecting vulnerable children and supporting those families who need it, the financial situation continues to be challenging as we work to build a budget that works for Essex residents both now and in to the future.

The Council will spend a gross budget (including schools) of £1,847m and a capital programme of £299m to deliver our priorities in 2018/19.

We have an outstanding track record of delivering value to tax-paying residents. We have delivered £350m of savings in the last 4 years by driving out inefficiency, generating income and reducing costs, and the budget now presented is based on delivering a further £59m of savings and efficiencies in 2018/19. This track record has enabled the Council not only to maintain services in new and

improved was at lower cost, but also to invest for the future so that Essex is a better place in which to live and work.

Despite our efforts, price increases, population growth and increasing demand for social services, particularly for social care, means we will need to utilise the 2% Social Care precept facility offered by government, and increase Council Tax by 2.99%. The precept is being used to insulate Adult Social Care from the savings required across other portfolios. The council tax for a band D property will be £1,221.75; this is an increase of £1.12 per household per week.

We need to ensure effective services not just for today, but for the future. Therefore, we have ambitious plans for our capital investment – a capital programme of £299m, an increase of £32m on that for 2017/18. This investment will help deliver our strategic aims and priorities, and in some cases give us a return on investment. The programme includes investment in independent living schemes for older and vulnerable adults, generation greater supply of housing, sufficiency of school places (including schools for children with special needs), and in schemes to promote economic growth, including improvements to the roads and footpaths that we all use daily. We are also providing and extra £3m investment in our highways over the coming twelve months.

We are determined to achieve the best service for residents in the most efficient way, this demands that we fully exploit the digital opportunity; therefore, additional investment is provided for digital transformation. We are also investing in our skills and capability to become more commercial and seek out opportunities to drive up income, which will have a specific focus over 2018/19.

The Revenue Support Grant will be phased out completely by 2020 (a £28m reduction in 2018/19) so our income will be derived from remaining specific grants, council tax, business rates, fees and charges and other trading revenues. Our responsibility to taxpayers demands focus on the generation of discretionary revenues, where we will use commercial thinking in all that we do. We will encourage payment for services as appropriate and where there is a demand for them and an ability to pay.

This budget will enable the delivery of our four strategic priorities:

- Enable inclusive economic growth;
- Help people get the best start and age well;
- Help create great places to grow up, live and work and;
- Transform the council to achieve more with less.

Enabling inclusive economic growth

Economic growth will improve not only the living standards of people in Essex but also their health and wellbeing, opportunities and life chances.

There are a number of challenges we need to overcome. While the number of well qualified people in Essex has increase, the workforce is less qualified that the UK as a whole and productivity remains lower than elsewhere.

We all know there is enormous untapped opportunity in the economy of Essex and an entrepreneurial spirit that is hard-wired in to our DNA which will we capitalise on in the future.

Amongst other things in the next year we will:

- Develop a local Industrial Strategy for Essex
- Invest £14m in broadband and £126m into major road schemes and maintenance. With an additional £3m set aside for potholes and footpath repairs.
- Invest £87m into mainstream schools and £17m into special schools bringing an additional 2,750 places.

Help people get the best start and age well.

ECC has a critical role to safeguard and support the most vulnerable people in the county. Over 65s projected to increase to almost one third (32%) by 2030.

The council is a proactive children's service authority delivering integrated services to children and families, with just over 1,000 children in care. We have the third lowest rate of children subject to a child protection plan in the country.

With demand for services growing faster than our funding streams, especially in adult social care, we need to continue our shift from a reactive service, to one that is focused on prevention, early intervention, recovery and enablement. Working with communities, the NHS and our private care sector will help achieve this change.

Some of our priorities for next year are:

- Grow the Essex Fostering Service to increase market share, reducing placements in more expensive independent fostering agencies
- Seek to increase the number of care providers rated good or outstanding by continuing to invest in the PROSPER programme; dementia training and rolling out the Gold Standards Framework for End of Life
- Launch a major initiative to improve physical activity in the population

Help create great places to grow up, live and work

Essex will need to build at least 136,000 new homes over the next 20 years – a 22% increase in the current number of homes. We are committed to facilitating that housing growth in such a way that the characteristics of the county we cherish are protected and enhanced. We are not just building new homes, we are building communities.

In the next year we will work with MHCLG to develop a strong partnership approach towards securing new homes and infrastructure in sustainable garden communities.

The council has a key role to play as a custodian of our environment for this and future generation. Our stewardship requires that less waste is produced, less carbon emitted, more homes and businesses protected from flooding and the use of our green space is maximised. New housing growth in Essex has the potential to deliver more connected, healthier communities.

Next year we will develop a Great Green Plan for Essex to unlock the value of our green assets.

I believe that individuals, families and communities are the best guardians of their own interests. Where it is appropriate to do so, we should support communities to help themselves. But we also recognise there are times when public services need to step in.

Next year we will bring forward a number of initiatives to support communities to help themselves by seeking to foster and build community capacity and capability;

- Continue investment to establish vibrant hubs in our communities that include library and registration services with other partners and our communities
- Develop a single point of access to optimise effectiveness of funded community schemes, including community agents and care navigators
- Develop new citizen-led approaches to enabling communities to improve well-being

Transform the Council to achieve more with less

We have delivered £350m of savings in the last 4 years by driving out inefficiency, innovating, generating income and reducing costs.

We are always conscious that the money that Essex County Council spends is taxpayers' money and we must invest it wisely on services that directly affect every resident and their communities and improve their lives.

And we need to ensure effective services not just for today, but for the future. Therefore, we have ambitious plans for our capital investment – a capital programme of £299m, an increase of £32m on that for 2017/18.

This investment will help deliver our strategic aims and priorities, and in some cases give us a return on investment.

As part of our innovation and adapting to the digital revolution we are increasing our digital and commercial capabilities as we aim to transform our services to be better, faster and cheaper.

In addition next year we will:

- Deliver £59m of further savings
- Develop a more commercial approach to enable further investment in services
- Optimise the use of our buildings, through changing and modernising working practices.

Appendix C

Pumphouse Community Brewery Limited

The brewery, which was the first community benefit society brewery in the country, has now been operating for over 2 years and to date has produced 133 separate brews and the equivalent of 920 barrels of beer or 66,000 pints

- The biggest event – a new brewer. Aaron took over in June, as the first employee of Pumphouse.
- Initially worked 2 days a week for us but will increase to 3 days shortly.
- We suspect that, at 22, Aaron is the youngest commercial brewer in the county (the country?) but we are pleased that he is also clearly a very talented and enthusiastic brewer. We are very fortunate having him working with us.
- He has introduced several new beers – St Margaret's, Old Gold, Golden Duck, Spring Ale – as well as continuing with the popular beers that Phil created, such as Gold, Tap and Pale Oktober. For those who recall it, there is also a batch of Jenny that will be ready soon.
- Of special note, was the bottled Imperial Milk Stout which was brewed in collaboration with Farmers Ales of Maldon. This is a 9% stout in the style exported to Imperial Russia in the 18th century; it is a very complex, very interesting and very unusual beer.
- The year saw more beers being sold away from the Green Man. While the GM remains our largest customer by far, we now sell over one third of our increasing production outside the village to pubs, clubs, beer festivals and retail outlets.
- Of course, Pumphouse is unusual in that we have a large involvement by enthusiastic, unpaid volunteers, without whom the whole adventure would not have been possible.

Looking to the future:

- Currently we are working on plans to renovate the adjacent section of the barn to improve storage and create more and better space for the increasing production.
- This means that we will be fundraising this year and will be seeking grants from a range of institutions.

- We also plan to do another share issue. This will be similar to the earlier one and will, in all likelihood, benefit from a 30% tax break for investors; so, watch this space.
- We are very pleased that the brewery has been asked by Camra and Braintree Lions to produce the festival beer for the Braintree Beer Festival in June. Following a competition, the name Golden Pride was chosen for the beer and the winner was presented with 6 bottles of Pumphouse beers.

You can follow us on our FB page - <https://www.facebook.com/Pumphousecommunitybrewery/> -and our website will be updated shortly.

Aaron is currently in the brewery on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but this will increase to 3 days a month from May, and we are usually open on Saturday mornings.

So please stop by and see what is going on. Oh, and buy some beer too.

Appendix D

Toppesfield Village Hall
AGM / Parish Meeting / Parish Council Report.
April 2018.

We held our AGM on 19th April. At this we described how we had managed the Hall over the last 10 months.

We stated that our aim is to provide a safe, warm, welcoming facility.

We gave an account of how we have worked to achieve this. This ranged from acquiring more bins and mats to new windows and doors! We carried out urgent repairs and replacements to ensure the safety of our users. We have increased the number of hirers using The Hall. We have implemented an updated hiring fee. Alongside actual physical improvements, we have underpinned the running of The Hall by putting in structured management systems. We have a Health and Safety policy and a system for recording checks to ensure health and safety aspects and electrical equipment are functioning correctly. We have a Financial Policy and procedures in place so that our systems for dealing with money are clear, transparent and can easily be followed and checked.

We have been fortunate in having two successful grant applications, we received £500 and £10,000.

The committee and officers for 2018-9 will remain the same as last year.

In this next year we would like to replace the cladding and insulation. The electricity system and heating system need updating. There will be ongoing maintenance and property improvements. We have a long list from which we are currently prioritizing according to urgency and funding.

Our thanks go to all those from the villages who have supported and helped us to make progress this year.

Appendix E

St Margaret's C of E Primary School

In September, all stakeholders of the school took part in visioning sessions with Mrs Thomas. They were asked what aspects of the school they felt were the strengths, what qualities they wanted the pupils to leave Year 6 with and what they would like people to say about us in the wider community. In addition to this, all stakeholders were also asked to do some 'blue sky' thinking and list things that they would like to see materialising at the school.

The sessions led to a string of common words and values which have been incorporated into the school's new vision which is: 'At St Margaret's C of E Primary School we *develop* **WISDOM** by *providing* a **CHALLENGING** and **RICH** curriculum; we *encourage* **ASPIRATION** by *rewarding* **RESILIENCE, HOPE** and **AMBITION**; *promoting* **DIGNITY** so that our children are **HEALTHY, RESPECTFUL, JOYFUL** and **TRUSTWORTHY**, *enabling* them to give back to their **COMMUNITY** and celebrate life in all its fullness.'

As well as this, from the Blue-Sky thinking, we generated a three- year plan which we have launched straight into this year. *See Plan*

Enrichment opportunities that have taken place this academic year are:

Enrichment so far this year:

- Spelling Bee competition
- Poetry Recital Competition
- Harvest House Sing Off
- Harvest Café- enterprise project Author visit- Josie Dom
- World Book Day and the public speaking competition/ reading breakfast
- Class 2- trip to Polar Museum
- Class 3- trip to Ancient Egyptian workshop at Saffron Walden Museum
- A-Cross the World- church workshop
- Class 1 trip to Brentwood Ski Centre
- KS2 choir with Mr Ribbits
- Individual piano tuition
- Multi-sports club for KS1
- Easter service
- Class 2 Assembly
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Gardening Club- child-led
- Lego Club- child-led
- House Skipping Competition
- Harvest festival
- KS1 Nativity
- KS2 Carol concert
- KS2 concert for the elderly in the community
- KS1 football tournament
- Christmas disco
- Visit to Operation Christmas Child Depot
- Class 2 trip to Hedingham Castle
- KS2 football boys tournament
- KS2 football girls tournament- hosts
- House Mini Apprentice Competition- enterprise linked to Christmas Fayre
- The Big Lego Project
- House DT afternoon
- Christmas Panto- Aladdin
- Planetarium
- Ukulele lesson

Part of our vision is that we strengthen the links between the school, church and the community which is why it is important that we have representation at this meeting this evening, so please

make us aware of any projects that we might get involved with; already we are writing to the local MP about improving the village Broadband.

If we could tap into to any funding, that would also be of huge benefit to our school as we have a small pot compared to our larger primaries, yet we do not want our children to miss out on anything that others might have at their schools. At the moment, we would like to purchase a portable speaker and microphone so that the children can dance at lunchtime. We would also like to update two classes and the hall with an interactive screen as our budget only stretched to improving the quality of two of our classes.

We are very excited about the journey that we are making towards outstanding and we are true to our vision; so please take time to read this as you might be able to come and get involved too.

Appendix F

ST MARGARET OF ANTIOCH PARISH CHURCH Annual report to Toppesfield Parish Council April 26th 2018

Toppesfield is one of seven parishes which make up the Benefice of the Hedinghams and Upper Colne Parishes, including Castle Hedingham, Sible Hedingham, Great and Little Yeldham, Tilbury, Stambourne and Toppesfield. The clergy consists of the Rector, one part-time vicar and an unpaid priest who helps when he is available. Sadly, our Rector Barbara Hume has been unwell and decided to retire at the end of December. We are now in the process of finding her replacement, which will take a few months. Meanwhile Liz Paxton, our part-time vicar, is working full-time to look after all seven churches, a tough task, for which we are very grateful.

Unlike many other small rural parishes, we continue to hold services every Sunday, and the church is open every day during the week for visitors to have a quiet moment in its peaceful atmosphere. But the church is also a place for big occasions - for special family events and the marking of the seasons of the Church's year. In 2017 there was one wedding, three christenings and nine funerals and large congregations at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. For these special occasions we now have a wonderful choir of village members who enjoy getting together to learn the music and join in the celebrations. If anyone would like to join, particularly if you sing alto, tenor or bass, please let Sue Blackie know (01787 237642).

The church is also well used by St Margaret's School. We are delighted to welcome the new Head Vanessa Thomas to the village. She is keen to strengthen the links between the church and the school. Sally Croft, on behalf of the church, leads some of their assemblies and the school uses the church regularly; the four school services of Easter, Leavers, Harvest and Christmas have a big congregation of children, parents and grandparents.

There have also been two big village events in the church this year. In September we held an exhibition of Village Memories, to which many people contributed family memorabilia, and in December we held the annual Christmas Tree competition; this year it featured a contest between the four houses of St Margaret's school to decorate the best tree.

Many people of course help the church in lots of ways, for which we are very grateful. They clean the church and the brass monuments, arrange beautiful flower displays, ring the bells, wind the clock etc. However, more volunteers to help with any of these will be very welcome.

We are also very grateful to the Parish Council for its financial support in keeping the churchyard tidy. Again, our thanks to Stuart Hammond who cuts the grass, and also to Boyd Page who has volunteered this winter to clear some of the denser undergrowth. Thanks also to those who tend the flower beds and to all those who keep their family graves tidy, and to everyone who, walking through, respect the churchyard as the resting place of many past generations of villagers.

The fabric of the church continues to be a major responsibility for the Parochial Church Council. This year the required five-yearly inspection of the church by an independent architect took place in July. It

highlighted work which needs to be carried out over the next few years. Some of these items are quite urgent and expensive and will require special fundraising to complete them.

The village's support of our fundraising events is as always much appreciated. This year the Fete will be on June 9th and the Supper Auction on November 16th; dates for our annual BBQ and Cheese and Wine will be arranged soon.

We are pleased to report that County Broadband have at last installed their equipment on the church tower roof. This should mean an improved broadband service to the village and surrounding area. In summary, thanks to all of you who support the church in one way or another and keep it alive in the village as part of our Christian heritage, and a place of peace and spiritual comfort not just on Sunday but every day.

Appendix G

Alan reported that Neighbourhood Watch has been quiet this year and has a presence at the village markets. More promotion is required and people are being asked to look after their own area. More people need to be involved in the scheme or it will be lost. The scheme is more about making people aware of what's going on around them and how to keep safe. Anyone can call 101 and report suspicious vehicles to the Police who will log the information.

Appendix H

Toppesfield Charities - as for each year, rental was received on the land from the farmer. Of the amount received, one half was for the church and the balance was disbursed as a cash gift to a number of elderly parishioners. The trustees are considering whether there are ways the charity land could be used to generate more income and be used in other ways.

Appendix I

Report to Annual Parish Meeting April 2018

Toppesfield Community Shop

I took over as Chair of the Community Shop Committee last summer, and the Shop was approaching its 15th birthday. At a meeting of volunteers, suggestions were made regarding how we could refresh the look and feel of the shop. In addition, it was apparent that our security measures needed to be updated although the local police did not feel we are a natural target for the gangs focussing on rural shops and post offices.

The first issue was the security and safety of our volunteers, and the police attended our meeting reiterating what to do should a robbery happen. It was decided to move the panic button to an easier-to-reach position, put up a security mirror and install state of the art CCTV (the system we had was, technologically speaking, archaic).

We then moved on to the look and feel of the shop and decided to replace the flooring and the white board (which was by now anything other than white) and have a sort out of the clutter that had accumulated over a period of years. Our thanks go to Rob Stafford Baker for replacing the floor over a weekend, and to everyone who helped set up a temporary shop in the village hall, and take apart, rebuild and re-stock the shelving.

The shop has also been rebranded as Toppesfield Community Shop, with an updated logo. The signs outside have been updated and refreshed, and we are about to hang the new, bespoke blinds. In total some £3800 has been spent.

From a business point of view, the biggest upheaval was the demise of our major wholesaler, Palmer and Harvey (P&H). This left us without a delivery service as all wholesalers contacted had a minimum order value of £1000 excluding tobacco. However, what seemed to be a catastrophe has been turned into an advantage.

P&H orders had to be a minimum number of lines to qualify for free delivery, and we found ourselves sometimes buying items which perhaps we didn't really need in order to qualify. Now we are in complete control, buying from Bookers in Colchester as well as other sources means that we buy only what we need. This also gives us the opportunity to see the special offers at the wholesaler and take advantage of them as we think them viable.

Financially the shop is in a strong position even after the costs of refurbishment. As at end February, there was some £11,000 cash on hand. In addition, the Community Shop loaned the Community Pub £7,500 in April 2017 to assist with some cash-flow difficulties. In the financial year just ended, it was agreed to amend the repayment terms to further assist the Pub Company.

The Community Shop continues to be a central contact point for the parish and is successful only because volunteers are willing to give up some time to make it so. We are a relatively small group of people and need to recruit more members to our group. Many volunteers do multiple shifts so that we can maintain the opening hours, and this cannot continue indefinitely.

With regard to the Post Office, I resigned more than 1 year ago but have continued in post as no replacement has been appointed. I am hoping that an applicant will come forward very soon. For the next few months, Keely and I will continue to be open 5 mornings each week, barring emergencies.

Trisha Roberts
Chair

Appendix J

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Village Show

Report for Parish Meeting 26th April 2018

The show was held on Saturday 16th September 2017 and we returned to the St Margaret's school for the venue. Many events and activities were planned to make use of the school playing field but yet again the weather was not in our favour and several stall holders cried off at the last minute. However, the Raptor display was very well received and the visitors enjoyed actually getting close to the different birds and holding them on their arm. Thank you to Lifestyles for sponsoring this event. Also, there was a play area for the young children organised by Little Chestnuts and a delicious BBQ which was very popular as it had an awning and it was so wet and cold. There were further stalls in the school building itself and refreshments in the hall as well.

There was a good number of entries and as ever, once all the exhibits have been placed, the hall looked and smelt fantastic as the fragrances from the flowers gradually developed. We make a few changes to the way the different classes were set out and displayed and I think this did improve it for the visitors and made life easier for the judges.

As ever the children's' exhibits were of a very high standard and the animals made from fruit and vegetables stole the show. Such wonderful imagination. Also, it being a very good year for fruit, there were seventeen entries in the 4 apples class, giving the judge quite a headache.

The raffle was done as we had more recently with several big baskets of things rather than lots of small prizes. I think all really enjoyed that. Thank you to everyone for donating prizes and Lesley for making up the baskets.

The show did make a surplus of £121 this year which will go towards improving the set up for the show. A huge thank you to Mrs Thomas, the new headteacher at the school, for all her help and cooperation in letting us use the school for the show.

Particular thanks to Lesley Scollay, Andrea Chinery, Maureen Dimmock, Zoe Hughes for all their help in organising the show and Liz Bickers and Linda Bowen for doing the teas at the last minute. Also, to Stuart Hammond for his help in getting tables from Village Hall and Berwick Hall. It is such a huge job for the last few days .and as ever more help would be great.

This year the show is on Saturday 8th September 2018 back in the village Hall. Don't be shy in coming forward if you would like to be involved.

Ann Read

7th April 2018

Toppesfield Parish Paths Partnership

Report for Parish Meeting 26th April 2018

As I write this report, the parish is dancing with daffodils but oh so soggy. It has been a year of contrasts but I think there will be absolute riots if, in the Summer, the councils impose a hose pipe ban!

On the footpath front, in May 2017 I wrote to the land owner re the obstruction of a stack of bales across the footpath that goes along side Berwick Hall wood. A few weeks later this was removed only to discover that loads of rubble had been dumped all the footpath parallel to the hedge from the farm buildings. I again spoke to the land owner and informed him he must flatten out the footpaths as they again had been obstructed. This he did.

For some years there has been an issue over the footpath that goes along side Ollivers garden where it had been illegally diverted and in Parish meeting last year I reported that an application from Mr Ketley had been received to divert this footpath.

However, things have moved on and applications were received to divert four footpaths and create two new ones. These footpaths are: -

Footpath 26 -the one that goes down the side of Ollivers which now goes down the track,

Footpath 25-One from the allotments down the hedge and across the Yeldham Road with removal of footpath 24 which went right across the field.

Footpath 51 which runs from the church yard right through 3 properties in Camoise Close is being extinguished.

Footpath 34 which runs towards Froyz Hall which is being diverted to a straight route across the field and to run parallel with the road near Froyz Hall to join up with route down to Lewseys farm site. This make Footpath 34 a dead end and this will be removed.

These diversions and removals of footpaths are currently going through the legal procedures. You may have noticed the official notices on the footpath signs. All these changes will rationalize the footpath system and I hope make better circular routes for us to enjoy.

On the walks front I'm afraid that because of health issues last year I did not arrange many walks. However, I did join the parish walks with the Walking for Wellbeing walks that I was leading from Toppesfield.

Tuesday 3rd October 2017 just two village people joined the w.w.b walkers when we walked down to Gt Yeldham, through the old station, across to the lakes and back up Scotneys lane.

Sunday 7th January 2018, my New Year walk, just 1 Toppesfield person joined some walkers from the WWB group and we walked across to Harrow Hill, up to Gainsford End through the vineyard, through Mallows Lane, down to Lewseys farm site, across the river, up at the side of Ollivers then across the Yeldham road and through the church yard. This is a really lovely walk with fabulous views across our parish.

Tuesday 6th March 2018 No village walkers but 22 WWB ones. I had planned to go up to Gainsford End but this entailed crossing arable fields and it was so wet that again we did the Gt Yeldham circuit.

Interesting to see that the Lake area has been sold to a person who is developing a carp fishery there and at that time they were digging a huge trench to put in fencing to prevent otters getting in to the fishery.

So, this year we hope to see the diversions put in place. Do enjoy our lovely parish. We are so privileged to be able to explore it.

Ann Read P3 officer 7th April 2018

Appendix K

Little Hedgehogs Parent & Toddler Group

Numbers are low but we are still going – In September we will have been open 30 years and we would like to arrange a reunion party in September/October to mark this. Fundraising event planned is a 100 square cake voucher raffle throughout May in the shop and a cream strawberry tea event in July – funds to help the groups celebrations. I would like to thank Little Chestnuts for letting us borrow the table and chairs again this year. We would like to advertise in the newsletter & local village noticeboards. We are a traditional parent & toddler group – welcoming all and learning through play.

Fit Fun Club

We meet twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday for an hour. We have 8 regular members that pay as we go – after changing time to fit in with other users of the hall – we have fun with salsa exercise. We wish to advertise in the newsletter & through out May/June posters on local notice boards and in the What's on magazine planned too!

Art & Craft Club

We have been running for over 15 years – only a few of us now but we enjoy our sessions. Unfortunately, due to increase in hirer fees we decided we would like to continue we now only meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month for an hour and a half 8pm – 9.30pm instead of 2 hours then we can afford to continue the club. We wish to advertise in the news letter and posters will be being placed in the local notice boards to hopefully increase a few new members and hopefully allowing us to increase our meeting back to once a week is our plan for the future – long may we continue.

Golden Chestnuts Club over 50's

We celebrated our 5th anniversary in November by having a lovely lunch in the Green Man – our Christmas party went well with a secret Santa for all. Unfortunately, after an increase in hirer fees members decided not to continue in the village hall. Vikki kindly agreed to allow us to hirer the back room of the pub. In Jan 18 we moved & continue to meet every Friday from 2pm – 4pm. In Feb we has a farewell lunch with Vikki out of our funds. We would like to thank Paula & Steve for allowing us to continue meeting in the back room. We have had a few new members. We are planning a Fish & Chip lunch soon once funds allow -hopefully at the end of May but this is to be arranged. Long may we continue – all welcome.

Appendix L

Little Chestnuts report 2018

This academic year Little Chestnuts has grown, we have 31 children registered to our setting, with another five joining in September.

Our committee has worked hard organising fundraising events, visitors and excursions that include a Christmas market and fun run, which was a great day and raised money for new garden and drawing equipment. Traveling theatre performed a Christmas pantomime 'where's Santa' and we held a Christmas lunch and party.

We organised a Easter party which included a hot lunch and a visit from Babs Barnyard the children thoroughly enjoyed caring for the rabbits guinea pigs, duck, chickens and ferrets.

Over the summer term we will be planting vegetables and flowers in both the allotment and our garden watching them grow and caring for them. Our summer outing this year is at Audley End miniature railway, we will be riding on the train through the fairy trail, with a walk through the garden and a picnic.

We have 13 children leaving us to go to primary school, 10 children will be attending St Margaret's Primary school, as always we will be working closely with the families chosen school, to provide information that will ensure a smooth transition for all the children and parents, as well as continuing to provide activities and tasks that prepare the children for 'big school'

Looking forward to September and the beginning of another school year, we are looking healthy with around 25 children registered to our setting.

I'd like to finish by thanking everyone who has supported Little Chestnuts over year helping with and attending fundraising events and giving us some lovely feedback about the care we provide and the lovely behaviour of the children, this was seen when we supported the cake sale in pub in September, the children enjoyed meeting new people and especially the cake.

Appendix M

Petanque.
Parish Meeting
April 2018

10 facts you might not know about Petanque!

1. In 'Petanque' the bowl is tossed (like this) in 'Boules' the bowl is bowled (like this).
2. Whilst it is commonly thought to be a French game it was actually originally invented by the Greeks.
3. It is thought French Sailors started playing on the beach with cannon balls hopefully just the small cannonballs!
4. We toss our bowls at a small wooden ball called a 'cochonnet', 'piglet'.
5. A bowl weighs 2- 2 1/2 lbs
6. We play all the year around, it is especially good on a cold winter Sunday morning.
7. In the summer we play on a weekday evening and take a picnic.
8. Over this winter we have entered teams in two competitions and done quite well!
9. We enjoy both the game and the social get together.
10. All ages can play and everyone is welcome.

Sheila also reported that the indoor bowls is still going well. They have played all through the winter and fun is had by all.

Appendix N

At the beginning of 2018 I was asked to start an exercise class based on gentle Tai Chi exercises. This I did and we began on 1st March, for an hour on Thursday afternoons at 4.15pm. We vary in numbers but an average of 7 or 8 have attended most weeks. Hopefully this will continue and be of benefit to those attending.

In time it would be nice to have a Tai Chi instructor to take the class but, in the meantime, we will enjoy the gentle exercise based on Tai Chi.

Jean Bagnall.

Appendix O



Toppesfield Cricket Club Annual Report 2018 Prepared 26.04.18

Background.

Coinciding with the village show a cricket match was first played against Old Southendians in September 2013, contesting for the Dick Ruggles Trophy. It was felt by some enthusiastic individuals that there was an opportunity to make more of the time an effort that was spent preparing a wicket for just a single game so it was decided to arrange some more friendly fixtures throughout the summer months.

On the back of this a grant application was made to the Parish Council which was duly accepted and effectively giving the 'rubber stamp' and the funds to 'get the ball' rolling. TCC was officially formed in August 2015.

Highlights of 2017 Season.

- A good year for the club which has grown in stature and 'grown legs' in terms of junior cricket.
- Last season the decision was taken to introduce annual subscriptions to help boost club funds. This didn't deter people and we had a total of 31 signed up members consisting of 16 senior playing members, 4 non-playing members and 11 juniors.
- We held adult net sessions and junior coaching throughout the summer months.
- We had three fixtures throughout the summer, Earls Colne, Cornish Hall End and Old Southendians of which we won two and lost one. One further fixture was cancelled.
- Sunday 3rd September we held the annual family day which included a match of Crinder's. This was extremely well attended, a good day had by all with the weather being kind to us. Thanks to Rob and Claire for serving up some fantastic food again, and we had some great prizes in the raffle. This is an important fund raiser for the club and a welcome boost to club funds.
- Friday 15th December we held our inaugural end of season club dinner at the Horse and Groom in Cornish Hall End, again well attended. Two trophies up for grabs, the 'Players player of the year' along with the Tiddler Trophy presented for the most memorable moment of the season. These went to Rob Sullivan in recognition for his work with the juniors throughout the year, and to Frazer Croft for his skating antics whilst trying to bat on a very wicket during the Dick Ruggles Trophy match.
- We are very grateful for donations received last year from both the village shop and Parish Council which has allowed us to invest in an ECB Certified coaching course for our coach Rob Sullivan and to purchase junior playing equipment.

Plans for New Season 2018

- Unfortunately due to the inclement weather it was a slow start to the season hampering wicket preparation. With a more recent dryer spell the wicket is now up to speed and set for the new season ahead.
- Senior net sessions were delayed because of this but pleased to report the first session took place this evening. Junior training to commence Thursday 10th May and each Thursday following starting at 6.30.
- A fuller fixture list this season with five scheduled against Little Bardfield, Rayne, Earls Colne, Cornish Hall End and The Dick Ruggles Trophy match against Old Southendians on village show day.
- Again we are looking to hold the Family Crinders Day on Sunday 15th July from 2.00 O'clock. Food and raffle will be provided.

Other things going on behind the scene this season.....

- Earlier this month the committee meet with Graham Pryke the Cricket Development Manager for the Essex County Cricket Board. The main purpose to talk through Junior Cricket to get a better understanding of our obligations as a club and individuals protection in the event something goes wrong. If we are to continue with Junior coaching this is a must in this day and age.
- Other positives that came from the meeting included, our affiliation to the North Essex District Cricket Board which in return for an annual subscription of £50 provides avenues for funding, support for cricket development but above all getting our name recognised and 'on the map'. We have already received a number of fixture requests.
- We are grateful to Trisha, an existing committee member, who has agreed to attend two training courses – Safeguarding and Protecting Children and a Safe Hands Worksop. We hope she will agree to take up the post of our Club Welfare Officer.
- We also have the potential to be involved in some ladies softball cricket which we were made aware of during our meeting with Graham. Anyone interested to contact one of the committee.
- We have been asked to contact the school to see if they would like a visit from ECCC to talk about All Star Cricket.
- A big thank you to Bernie Stevenson who has completely redecorated the inside of the pavilion and also has installed some lighting into the changing rooms. It looks so much better!

Club Needs

- This year we need to invest in a heavy motorised roller. For us to grow as a club this is an essential piece of equipment to provide a safer, better playing surface and vital if we want to attract teams to play here in Toppesfield. This unfortunately is an expensive piece of kit.
- Protection netting for the playing equipment to allow children to play safely whilst a match is taking place.
- If anyone is interested in being part of the club whether in a playing, helping or supporting capacity please come and speak with one of our committee members.

Questions for the P.C.

- There were talks that the Dick Ruggles bench was going to be relocated to the opposite side of the field (where the old bench once stood). T.C.C would be in favour of this happening as there would then be no need to move the memorial elm tree which is currently located next to it as this is quite a novelty and we would not be the only club with a tree inside it's boundary.
- Can anything be done about the ever-increasing population of rabbits?
- Careful consideration needs to be given before sighting any additional play equipment; this could be detrimental to future cricket matches if located in the field of play. Can we ask that T.C.C is consulted reference any future plans?

On behalf of Toppesfield Cricket Club.

Nick Hasler.

The Committee

Mary-Ann Stevenson, Nick Hasler, Bernie Stevenson. Trisha Roberts, Rob Sullivan, Rob Stafford-Baker.