



Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 3rd April 2025 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

25/49. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Frances Winter – Chaired the meeting

Councillor Amanda Smith

Councillor Jane Daines

Councillor Chris Neale – arrived 8.20pm

Also, in attendance:

District Cllr Richard van Dulken

David Oxnam – Neighbourhood Plan Group

Kaaren Berry – Clerk

25/49.1 To accept apologies from members of the council.

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Kitty Bourlet and Councillor Jeremy Graves who were away and from Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes who is recovering from an operation.

Apologies were also received from County Councillor Peter Schwier.

25/50. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

No declaration of members interests were made at this meeting.

25/51. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- He will be liaising with Cllr Schwier regarding the 5 worst potholes in the parish – these will include the ones on Great Yeldham Road and Cllr van Dulken will look at the ones along Stambourne Road to possibly include this as well.
- Braintree District Council is trying to stop homelessness by helping people prevent this from happening by looking at various options that could be open to residents.
- An Essex County Council household waste survey which was carried out across the county showed that 30% by weight of waste in the black bin is food waste and 10% is glass. Recyclable items need to be disposed of correctly to reduce this, a behavioural change is required to change this.

25/52. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council meeting held on 6th March 2025.

Cllr Winter proposed the minutes were agreed and Cllr Smith seconded this. The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting.

25/53. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

The clerk reported that the internal audit has been booked for the 28th May 2025 at 2pm.

25/54. Actions from previous meeting:

25/54.1 Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records. No update available – hold over to next meeting.

25/54.2 Cllr Graves to make further enquiries regarding the location of the Gainsford End Gate sign and contact Braintree District Council to see who provides the village gates should a new one be required. No update available – hold over to next meeting.

- 25/54.3 Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project. No update available – hold over to next meeting.
- 25/54.4 Clerk to arrange collection of paint for the telephone box. Paint has been collected and is in the Parish office.
- 25/54.5 Cllr Neale to enquire about costs for replacement windowpanes for the telephone box. Enquires made but no response has been received.
- 25/54.6 Clerk to purchase commemorative bench and silhouette figures for VE day and arrange delivery to the village hall. These have been purchased – the figures are in the parish office and the bench is in the Green Man Barn.
- 25/54.7 Cllr Graves to ask Cllr Daines to take on the tree planting project. Cllr Daines does not wish to lead the project but is willing to help Cllr Graves.

25/55. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 25/55.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. David Oxnam answered questions from the parish council regarding the Neighbourhood plan and various points were discussed. It was resolved that David would progress the plan and any revisions would be made once the public consultation is complete.
- 25/55.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received. Updates received have been forward to councillors prior to the meeting.
- 25/55.3 Tree planting project –hold over to the next meeting.
- 25/55.4 Parish Council Strategy document – to receive comments on the draft documents and determine Further actions. The document was discussed, and the revised version was agreed. However, it agreed a date for responses to be returned by should be added - this was suggested as the 30 June 2025. The other point was that the parish council is officially Toppesfield Parish Council and not Toppesfield and Gainsford End Parish Council. It was also asked if this could be printed and ready for delivery with the May parish newsletter.
- 25/55.5 Playfield update / progress on funding / quotes – no further update available. Hold over to the next meeting.
- 25/55.6 Telephone Box for Defib – volunteers required to help paint the telephone box. An advert has been placed on Facebook asking for volunteers and if no response it will also be placed in the next newsletter. Work will be asked if it can be completed by the end of the summer if a volunteer comes forward.
- 25/55.7 Annual Parish Meeting – arrangements for the meeting to be finalised. It was agreed that the format will be the same as last year. Clerk to send out invitations and advertise the meeting.
- 25/55.8 Play Area inspection due May 2025 – do the parish council wish engage RoSPA Playsafety to carry out the inspection again this year. It was agreed that the inspections should be carried out again this year.

25/56. Upcoming events

- 25/56.1 Annual litter pick – 5th April 2025 – Event has been advertised, loan of equipment arranged, details for the morning to be finalised. Cllr Winter offered to help greet volunteers and monitor their return. Equipment has been delivered, and the collected rubbish will be picked up by Braintree District Council on Monday 7th April 2025.
- 25/56.2 VE Day celebrations – no update available.
- 25/56.3 Christmas Event – It was agreed that the Christmas Tree will be erected on the 29th November and the lighting up event will be held on the 6th December 2025. It was further agreed that the tree will be taken down on the 3rd January 2026.

25/56. Correspondence Received:

- 25/56.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 25/56.2 Braintree District Council Street Scene Partnership Agreement 2025/26 – do the parish council wish to sign up to the scheme again for the coming financial year. It was agreed to sign up to the scheme and the contract was signed by Cllr Neale.
- 25/56.3 Braintree District Council – Mobile Rural Community Supermarkets – assistance is required to Identify churches, halls etc where the van could visit on a scheduled basis. The Cost-of-Living Small Grant Scheme launches on 31st March 2025. It was felt that there is no appropriate space available to host this service.
- 25/56.4 Request receive for the Parish Council to consider holding the Toppesfield Charities Money on

their behalf. This was agreed in principle but the details would need working out.

It was also noted that a response had been sent to the parish council regarding the School Bus incident in January 2025.

25/57. Financial Accounts:

25/57.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and Cllr Winter proposed they were accepted, and this was seconded by Cllr Neale. Payments are detailed in Appendix A.

25/57.2 Updating of Asset Register 2025 – discuss comments received and determine any further actions. Cllr Neale to look at this in more detail and report back.

25/58 Highways:

25.58.1 Another incident along Church Lane with a lorry becoming stuck. This has been reported to Cllr Schwier to add weight to a request for appropriate signage for the lane. Further to the latest reported incident Cllr Schwier has highlighted the need for signage as soon as possible with the cabinet lead for Highways.

25/59. Planning:

| Application No: | Description | Address | Action |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| 25/00475/VAR | Variation of Condition 2 of (Approved plans) and Condition 7 (Vehicle Parking) of approved application 22/00732/FUL granted on 13/05/2022 for the erection of a two-storey medical centre with allocated parking. Variation would allow a change in design. | Land North Of Osier Way Sible Hedingham Essex | Comments to Braintree District Council by 7 th April 2025 |
| 25/00617/LBC | Removal of internal partitions from the rear single storey element, removal of fireplace and removal of internal walls to each side of the chimney stack. Block up 4no. existing windows, 1no. existing door and installation of 3no. rooflights, installation of 1no. full height window, with a canopy to be provided to the northeast elevation of the single storey element. All existing external masonry walls forming the newly formed lounge area are to be lined internally with insulation material. | Toppesfield Hall Great Yeldham Road Toppesfield CO9 4LS | Comments to Braintree District Council by 24 th April 2025 |

The above applications were discussed, and no comments were made on either of them.

It was noted that a new site submission for the call for sites local plan review has been received on the former RAF Wethersfield site.

25/60. Communications: no items were discussed under this item.

25/61. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Cllr Neale asked if the parish council could contribute any money towards the coach for the schools Colchester Zoo visit. It was agreed that this if this is to be considered a formal request would need to be made and placed on the agenda for discussion. However, it was felt that the parish council would be unlikely to support the request.

25/62. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 1st May 2025 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 24th April 2025 at 7.30pm and will be held at Toppesfield Village Hall.

25/63. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.30pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- **Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records.**
- **Cllr Graves to make further enquiries regarding the location of the Gainsford End Gate sign and contact Braintree District Council to see who provides the village gates should a new one be required.**
- **Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.**

Appendix A

| | | | | |
|--|---|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Accounts - 3rd April 2025 | | | | |
| | | | £ | |
| Community Account | | | | |
| | Balance as at 1st April 2025 | | 35,540.80 | |
| All previous payments issued balance should be | | | <u>£35,548.80</u> | |
| Income Received Included in the balance figure of 1st April 2025 | | | | |
| | | | £0.00 | |
| | | | <u>£0.00</u> | |
| Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 1st April 2025 | | | | |
| 01.04.25 | EDF Energy - The Pavilion electricity supply | | £8.00 | |
| | | | <u>£8.00</u> | |
| Direct Debits To be taken this month | | | | |
| 07.04 .25 | Vodafone contract | | £13.80 | |
| | | | | Unrecoverable VAT |
| Payments to be approved: | | | | |
| Date of invoice | | Chq No: | | |
| 11.03.25 | Adrian Oxnam - Neighbourhood Plan brochure design and revisions | By Bacs | £450.00 | £0.00 |
| 18.03.25 | K Berry - Remibursment for purchasing the VE Day 80th Commemorative bench and | By Bacs | £1,025.00 | £0.00 |
| 26.03.25 | RCCE - Subscription renewal - 1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026 | By Bacs | £61.80 | £0.00 |
| 31.03.25 | HMRC - Tax on March salary | By Bacs | £35.20 | £0.00 |
| 31.03.25 | K Berry - March salary | By Bacs | £731.54 | £0.00 |
| | | | <u>£2,303.54</u> | |
| | | | | |
| | | | £33,223.46 | |