



# Toppesfield Parish Council



## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Via Google Meet at 7.30pm

### 21/32. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

#### The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Alan Collard – Chair  
Councillor Chris Neale – Vice chair  
Councillor Andrea Chinery  
Councillor Boyd Page  
Councillor Daisy Watson  
Councillor Gemma Mackman

#### Also, in attendance:

District Councillor Richard van Dulken  
No members of the public were in attendance.  
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

#### Apologies were received from:

Councillor Amanda Smith  
County Councillor David Finch

Prior to the meeting commencing, the Chair welcomed new Councillors Gemma Mackman and Daisy Watson.

### 21/33. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

No declarations of Members interests were made.

### 21/34. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken reported:

- County Council David Finch will not be standing for re-election in May.
- Braintree District Council have adopted part 1 of the Local Plan and the inspector is looking at part 2 in July 2021.
- Councillor Community Grants - £200 was donated towards the tree planting project, there are still funds available which can be carried forward into the new financial year where a further £1500 is available for the ward.
- Braintree District Council have agreed their budget for 2021/2022 and there is no rise in their part of the Council Tax. There is a 1.5% increase for social care and Essex County Council are not increasing their part either. £500,000 has been budgeted allocated to the climate change emergency group. It has also been budgeted to pay towards the replacement of the all-weather pitch in Halstead. The surplus of Council Tax collections will be distributed to the parishes. Also Essex County Council has increased the monies for projects under the local Highways panel from £400,000 to £800,000.
- Network 5 – the clerk at Great Yeldham Parish Council will send out an invitation for dates to arrange a meeting.
- BALC revival – it was asked if Toppesfield Parish Council are looking at joining this group. Councillor Collard did attend the first two meetings and as yet the parish council have not made a decision. The BALC covers 58 parishes with a wide range of areas and issues but it could be used a sounding board platform.

### **21/35. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting**

The minutes from the Parish Council meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting this was proposed by Councillor Collard and seconded by Councillor Page.

### **21/36. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only**

There were no matters arising.

### **21/37. Actions from previous meeting:**

21/37.1 Clerk to order litter pickers. The litter pickers were purchased and are located in the parish office if anyone wished to use them.

### **21/38. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:**

21/38.1 Neighbourhood Plan Update – Councillor Page reported that there has been no progress since last month and due to the pressures of work, Nigel Meeks is stepping down as Chair of the steering group. Councillor Page is in discussions with a parishioner to take on the role.

Councillor Collard expressed his appreciation to Nigel Meeks on behalf of the parish council for his Contributions and will write to him to convey this.

Councillor Page to update Councillors Watson and Mackman on progress of the Neighbourhood plan. A provisional date for a public meeting was agreed as the 10 July 2021 – Councillor Chinery to confirm booking with the village hall.

21/38.2 Updates from

- Project Working Group including update and discussion about Green Man barn – Councillor Collard reported that the potential price for the barn has been discussed however the District Valuer will need to sign this off. The projected figures were summarised and will be circulated to all councillors for consideration. It was mentioned that the shop would need to seek funding to assist with any moving of the business.
- Environment working group, including tree project and Climate Crisis Conference – Councillor Collard reported that all 40 trees have now been planted by 8 families. The trees were a mixture of Oak, Field Maple, Hornbeam and Hawthorn. Further planting spaces to be sought so that hopefully the project can be repeated next year.  
It was suggested that during future parish council meetings discussion can be held as to what we can do as a parish to help address climate change issues. Suggestions were to look at the council's standing orders and financial regulations and see where these could be adapted to include procedures to address climate change. Councillor Watson was tasked with drafting ideas for a policy on Environment and Ecology for the parish council.
- Proposal to organise a spring litter pick for late March/early April – this was discussed, and a date agreed, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 to meet at the village hall at 10am. Clerk to contact Braintree District Council for equipment and rubbish collection.
- Discussion about creating a Toppesfield & Gainsford End Community Fund – Discussions on this included how it could be funded. This could be a central fund for people/groups to access. Points to be looked at are objectives of the fund, trustees, how it would be managed and the fund name. Funding suggestions included a '100' club. Councillor Collard proposed that the parish council spend time in looking into this project and all those present agreed. Councillors to look at possible structure of the charity/fund.

21/38.3 Discussion on road map out of lock down - TGE response group and putting the swings back on the play equipment etc.

It was agreed to continue with the prescription helpline number until the 29<sup>th</sup> March as only a few calls are being taken now. The wellbeing number will remain open as more mental health issues may arise as we emerge from lockdown. Councillor Collard to speak with those who run the helpline to see how long they are willing to manage this.

It was agreed to replace the swings on the 29<sup>th</sup> March as lockdown begins to ease.

**21/38. Correspondence Received:**

- 21/38.1 EALC Legal and County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 21/39.2 Stambourne Chapel Care aims to support vulnerable people – volunteers are being sought for various roles such as befriending, visiting, advocacy, shopping, collecting prescriptions. Posters are displayed detailing the project and information is available on the parish council website.
- 21/39.3 Closure of Gainsford End Post box – correspondence received from residents regarding its temporary closure. This was discussed and it was agreed that the issue will be monitored and for the clerk to write to the Royal Mail regarding this.
- 21/39.4 Correspondence from parishioner with concerns regarding the works at Cust Hall Bridge – these concerns were passed onto highways and the response was passed back to the parishioners who raised them.  
Concerns over signage at the bridge were also raised due to a recent near miss between a cyclist and a car. It was suggested ‘road narrows’ signs are needed. Clerk to follow this up with Highways.

The condition of Mallows Lane was also raised – clerk to contact Highways regarding this.

**21/40. Financial Accounts:**

- 21/40.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval - The report was received. Councillor Page proposed this was approved and Councillor Collard seconded this. See Appendix A.

**21/41. Highways:**

- 21/41.1 Update from Essex Highways regarding Cust Hall Bridge – the bridge is open for single lane traffic, as the replacement work to Cust Hall Bridge is almost complete. There is no requirement for the road closure whilst the remainder of the work is carried out, instead there will be a 2-way traffic light system in place until the 12th March.
- 21/41.2 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(1) - Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Carters Hill, Toppesfield Road, Toppesfield. This link <https://one.network/?tm=120879265> shows details of the intended closure of Carters Hill, Toppesfield Road, due to commence on 11th March 2021 for 7 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Gigaclear Limited undertakes superfast fibre optic broadband installation.
- 21/41.3 Park Lane Car Park – since December there have been 6 occasions where the removal of the remaining vehicle in the car park has been promised but to no avail. This matter is still being pursued.

**21/242. Planning:**

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
21/00475/HH	Proposed Single Storey Rear Extension (Existing Single Storey Rear Conservatory to be demolished)	Cherry Tree Cottage, Gainsford End, Toppesfield CO9 4EG	Comments to Braintree District Council by 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
20/01837/HH	Conversion of detached garage to provide ancillary accommodation, including a revised roof profile from mono-pitched to double pitched.	1 Aden Cottages Stambourne Road Toppesfield CO9 4NB	Application Granted
20/02109/FUL	Retention of Fishery Manager's Temporary Dwelling and fish hatchery.	Fishing Lakes Great Yeldham Hall Toppesfield Road Great Yeldham Essex	Comments to Braintree District Council by 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2021

Application number 21/00475/HH was discussed, and no objections were raised.

Application number 20/02109/FUL was discussed and there were no further comments from that on the submission in January 2021 regarding this application.

**21/43. Communications:**

21/43.1 Update on broadband project – Councillor Neale reported that there has been no further progress from last month and the parish council may have to look at making up the shortfall for the project. However, the village hall and other village initiatives are looking into the possibility of taking up the service which will reduce the shortfall and Councillor Neale is following up with those who did not take up their vouchers.

**21/44. Playing Fields & The Dick Ruggles Pavilion**

21.44.1 Little Chestnuts circus update – Councillor Chinery reported that the Circus has been rebooked for the 19 June 2022 as a result of the current restrictions. Tickets should be on sale in the Autumn and the possibility of having other stalls around the circus and how village organisation can join in the event are being looked into.

**21/45. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda**

No items for the next agenda were raised.

**21/46. Date of the next meeting:**

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 at 7.30pm – this will be held virtually or at Toppesfield Village Hall depending on government advice at the time.

**21/47. Close**

The meeting closed at 9.28pm

Signed:

Dated:

**Action Summary:**

**Councillor Collard to write to Nigel Meeks.**

**Councillor Page to update Councillors Watson and Mackman on progress of the Neighbourhood plan.**

**Councillor Chinery to confirm booking with the village hall for the Neighbourhood Plan public meeting.**

**Councillor Collard to circulate to all councillors the figures and narrative regarding the barn project.**

**Councillor Watson to draft ideas for a policy on Environment and Ecology for the parish council.**

**Clerk to contact Braintree District Council for equipment for a litter pick and arrange a rubbish collection.**

**Councillors to look at possible structures of setting up a charity/fund for the benefit of the parish.**

**Clerk to write to Royal Mail regarding the closure of Gainsford End post box.**

**Clerk to contact Highways regarding the possibility of road narrows signage at Cust Hall bridge.**

**Clerk to contact Highways regarding the condition of Mallows Lane.**

# Appendix A

Accounts - 4 March 2021				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 26 February 2021		£27,770.63	
All previous issued cheques cashed balance should be			<u>£28,320.63</u>	
Income Received				
			£0.00	
			£0.00	
			<u>£0.00</u>	
Direct Debits	included in balance figure of 26.02.21			
01.02.21	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00	£0.00
		Balance	<u>£10.00</u>	
Payments approved at prior meetings and paid : Inculded in balance figure of 26.02.21				
13.02.21	Friends of St Margarets - grant for home learning devices		£550.00	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
Feb-21	CPRE - Membership renewal	By Bacs	£36.00	£0.00
various	K Berry - Memorial Plaque, litter pickers, folder & ink	By Bacs	£108.22	£0.00
04.03.21	Toppesfield Village Hall Committee - Quartely charges for Jan - Mar 2021	By Bacs	£253.50	£0.00
04.03.21	Paul Clark Printing - March Newsletter	By Bacs	£240.00	£0.00
28.02.21	K Berry - February Wages	By Bacs	£380.94	£0.00
			<u>£1,018.66</u>	
			<u>£26,751.97</u>	