



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th June 2026 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

26/88. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes - Chair
Councillor Chris Neale
Councillor Jane Daines

Also, in attendance:

9 members of the public
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet
Councillor Jeremy Graves
Councillor Amanda Smith

District Cllr Richard van Dulken
County Councillor Nathan Robins

26/88.1 To accept apologies from members of the council

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Bourlet who was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments and Cllrs Graves and Smith due to family commitments.

26/89. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

No declaration of Members interests were made at this meeting.

26/90. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Representatives from Robin Hood End presented their case regarding planning application no: 26/01110/SCR, Proposed Solar farm development at Robin Hood Solar Farm, Finchingfield Road, Stambourne and urged the parish council to write to Braintree District Council to request a full environmental impact assessment is carried out. The Chair confirmed that this is on the agenda for discussion and representation from the parish council would be made to Braintree District Council before the submission deadline.

A resident asked if there was any progress on the previous reported blocked drains. It was confirmed that 5 blocked or partially blocked drains around Cust Hall have been reported to Highways and waiting for works to be completed.

Cllr Richard van Dulken sent in his report as follows:

- As you may be aware, I have been elected as Chairman of BDC for the coming civic year, which will involve a hundred or so official visits, ribbon cuttings etc. as representative of the Council and District.
- I have put comments on the Planning Portal re the proposed solar farm development, 1) asking that Toppesfield (and Stambourne) PCs be consultees as almost all of the solar farm would be in both Parishes and 2) in view of the sensitive location I strongly urge that an Environmental Impact Assessment be required before going any further.

- Nothing to report re Wethersfield - as far as I'm aware the numbers of residents is still below the 800 limit and there have been no incidents to mention.
- There has been some progress on the long-awaited Hedingham Medical Centre - the developers One Medical Property have signed off with NHS and should be able to begin works shortly.
- I look forward to your request for a grant from my Councillor's Community Grant (£300) towards the wildlife area in the Rec - fencing?

26/91. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council Meeting held on 14th May 2026.

Cllr Neale proposed the minutes for the meeting held on 14th May 2026 were agreed and Cllr Daines seconded this. The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting.

26/92 Co-option of Councillor

26/92.1 Consideration of applications to fill the casual vacancy.

Two applications were received, by a majority vote Coral Fordham was voted on as councillor.

Coral Fordham was present at the meeting accepted the position, signed the acceptance of office form and joined the councillors for the remainder of the meeting.

26/93. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

There were no matters arising.

26/94. Actions from previous meeting:

26/94.1 Cllr Graves to obtain costs for the VE Day bench pad in the Churchyard. No update available.

26/94.2 Cllr Neale to follow up on quotes to carry out the work on the RoSPA action list once the new action list has been received. New report has been received – Cllr Edwards-Holmes to contact companies to address all items noted on the reports.

26/94.3 Cllr Graves to look at setting up a charity bank account. No update available.

26/94.4 Cllr Smith to obtain quotes for fencing the wildflower area for the school. Clerk to advise the Headteacher to string off the area and the parish council will seek quotes.

26/94.5 Cllr Bourlet to review the new website and agree content. Councillors agreed that they are happy with the new website layout.

26/94.6 Clerk to follow up with Essex County Council re the footpath from Camoise Close to the Church. No formal response has been received as yet.

26/94.7 Cllr Neale to enquire with a resident to see if solar lights can be put up to light the footpath. Permission has been given to place a solar light on the fence next to the footpath from Camoise Close to the Church. Cllr Fordham to enquire if a light could be placed on the garage at the end of the pathway. Cllr Edwards-Holmes to purchase a solar light & fixings – a budget of £75 was agreed by those present.

Footpath 13 & 48 need maintaining – Cllr Daines to find out who the landowner is.

26/95. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

26/95.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. No update received.

26/95.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre – no update received.

26/95.3 Update on Strategy document actions. Cllr Fordham will take the lead on the footpath and signage section. It was also agreed that 3 to 5 trees would need to be purchased for the Causeway. Cllrs Neale and Daines to find costings.

26/95.4 Placement of grit bins in playing field update. This item is ongoing.

26/95.5 New website update – new website is nearly completed and clerk to be shown how to upload content.

26/95.6 Updated Internal Financial Control Policy to be review and considered for adoption. Cllr Neale was appointed to carry out the checks as mentioned in the policy. The Financial Control Policy was proposed for adoption and all present agreed to adopt it. Cllr Edwards-Holmes signed the policy.

26/96. Upcoming events:

There are no upcoming events.

26/97. Correspondence Received:

26/97.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler - circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.

26/97.2 Qualitas Energy - Introduction to Robin Hood Solar Farm, near Robinhood End, southeast of Haverhill.

26/97.3 Braintree District Council re Finchingfield and Wethersfield Neighbourhood Plan. Views on the plan (under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) are being sought. The plan can be view and commented on at <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/policyconsultation> The consultation is open until 5pm on Wednesday 1st July 2026. There were no comments from the parish council to be submitted.

26/97.4 Braintree District Council - Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) - The public consultation will provide an opportunity for residents to have their say in support of or against the order. The proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) would look to implement several measures which can be found at the following website links. Residents can submit their views via the online public consultation.

Website Links: Consultations and engagement – Braintree District Council

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/council/consultations/1>

Consultations – Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) – Braintree District Council

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/council/public-spaces-protection-order-pspo-consultation/1>

Dog control PSPO FAQ's – Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) – Braintree District Council

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/council/public-spaces-protection-order-pspo-consultation/3>

Dog control public spaces protection order survey | Instructions – Braintree District

Council <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/xfp/form/763>

26/97.5 Essex County Council - Salt Bag Partnership Scheme for Winter 2026/27 has been launched.

Closing date is the 21st July 2026 if the parish council would like to take part this year. It was agreed not to take part this year.

26/98. Financial Accounts:

26/98.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and accepted. Payments as detailed in Appendix A were agreed and signed by Cllrs Neale and Daines.

26/98.2 Unity trust Bank – forms are being completed by councillors.

26/98.3 Grant request from St Margarets Church for further funding towards the Clock repair and reinstatement. It was proposed by Cllr Neale and seconded by Cllr Edwards-Holmes that £250 is granted to the project as a larger grant would prohibit other groups from applying. A further application would be considered after a period of 6 months if funds were still required.

26/99 Highways:

No matters were discussed under this heading.

26/100 Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
26/00960/FUL	Proposed change of use of former agricultural buildings to holiday let accommodation and associated ancillary retail and office use.	Toppesfield Hall Great Yeldham Rd Toppesfield CO9 4LS	Braintree District Council Decision Pending Consideration
26/01110/SCR	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 - Proposed solar farm development	Robin Hood Solar Farm Finchingfield Road Stambourne Essex	Comments to Braintree District Council by 9 th June 2026

Planning application number 26/01110/SCR was discussed and Cllr Edwards-Holmes will write a response from the parish council for submission.

26/101. Communications:

26/101.1 Newsletter for July / August 2026 – articles to be submitted by 15th June 2026.

26/102. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Christmas event to be placed on the July agenda.

Clerk to arrange conversation with the school, church and representatives from the parish council regarding access and issues relating to access to the playing fields.

26/103. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is proposed to be held on Thursday 2nd July 2026 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

26/104. Close Cllr Edwards-Holmes closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Signed:

Dated:

- Cllr Graves to obtain costs for the VE Day bench pad in the Churchyard.
- Cllr Edwards-Holmes to contact firms for costs to address all issues raised on the RoSPA reports.
- Cllr Graves to look at setting up a charity bank account.
- Cllr Smith to obtain quotes for fencing the wildflower area for the school.
- Clerk to follow up with Essex County Council re the footpath from Camoise Close to the Church.
- Cllr Fordham to enquire with a resident to see if solar lights can be put up to light the footpath.
- Cllr Edwards-Holmes to purchase solar light for pathway from Camoise Close to the Church.
- Cllr Daines to enquire who the land owner is where footpath 13 and 48 cross fields.

Appendix A

Accounts - 4th June 2026					
			£		
Community Account					
	Balance as at 2nd June 2026		£42,760.99		
All previous authorised payments issued balance should be			£42,768.99		
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 2nd June 2026					
			£0.00		
			£0.00		
Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 2nd June 2026					
01.05.26	EDF - Pavilion electric		£8.00		
			<u>£8.00</u>		
Direct Debits to be taken this month					
07.05.26	Vodafone contract		£15.75		
					Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:					
Date of invoice		Payment Method			
14.05.26	Braintree District Council - annual payment for grounds maintenance	By Bacs	£1,670.40		£0.00
27.04.26	Grant to St Margaret of Antioch Church - Clock face project	By Bacs	£250.00		£0.00
19.05.26	Dr Car phone top-up - Reimbursement to Cllr Edwards-Holmes	By Bacs	£50.00		£0.00
15.05.26	Dog Poop Bag Dispensers - Reimbursement to K Berry	By Bacs	£89.37		£0.00
28.04.26	Clear Councils Insurance Management Ltd	By Bacs	£1,330.90		£0.00
02.06.26	Louis Finch - new website development	By Bacs	£500.00		£0.00
02.06.26	Playsafety Ltd - RoSPA inspections for both playing fields	By Bacs	£218.40		£0.00
01.06.26	HMRC - Tax on May salary	By Bacs	£0.00		£0.00
01.06.26	K Berry - May salary	By Bacs	£791.31		£0.00
					£0.00
			<u>£4,916.13</u>		
			£37,844.86		