



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on Thursday 5th February 2026 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

26/17. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes Chaired the meeting
Councillor Frances Winter
Councillor Jane Daines
Councillor Jeremy Graves
Councillor Chris Neale

Also, in attendance:

Three residents from the parish

Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet
Councillor Amanda Smith
District Cllr Richard van Dulken
County Councillor Peter Schwier

26/17.1 To accept apologies from members of the council

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

26/18. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

Cllr Edwards-Holmes declared an interest on agenda point 26/26.2 and will not participate in the discussion/decision on who to engage.

26/19. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Cllr Richard van Dulken sent in his report as follows:

- The Local Plan was approved at Full Council on 3rd February 2026 to go forward to public consultation, and I will forward consultation details when available.
- I still have £200 from my Councillors' Community Grant for the current year, but I can carry it forward to next financial year.
- No developments at Wethersfield, and number of residents is back down to below 800.
- I have had 30 prints of my picture of the church done and await news on when to take them to the shop, if appropriate.

26/20. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council Meeting held on 8th January 2026.

Cllr Neale proposed the minutes for the meeting held on 8th January 2026 were agreed and Cllr Edwards-Holmes seconded this. The minutes were signed as a true record of the meetings.

26/21. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

There were no matters arising.

26/22. Actions from previous meeting:

- 26/22.1 Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project. This action is ongoing.
- 26/22.2 Cllr Neale to follow up on quotes to carry out the work on the RoSPA action list. This action is ongoing.
- 26/22.3 Cllr Neale and Clerk to investigate charity bank accounts. It was agreed that it would be better for the Charities money to be in their own account. Cllr Neale can look into setting an account up if the charity is registered. Cllr Graves will look into setting up an account for the Toppesfield Charities.
- 26/22.4 Cllr Neale to liaise with the Cricket Club re the school's project to plant wildflowers in the playing field. A representative is happy to view the area once it has been marked out.
- 26/22.5 Cllr Smith to mark out the area the school council are hoping to use for the wildflower project. This will hopefully be done next week.
- 26/22.6 Clerk to gain further quote for council's website / domain name. Quote gained and will be discussed under agenda point 26/26.2.

26/23. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 26/23.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. The deadline for Statutory Consultees to respond to the draft plan is the 6th March 2026.
- 26/23.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received – no further information than that of Cllr van Dulken's report.
- 26/23.3 Strategy document review of responses and plan to implement to be considered. A working group will meet on 24 February 2026 to discuss this and report back to the parish council.
- 26/23.4 To review the parish council's data map and risk assessment to comply with Assertion 10. To be considered at the March meeting.
- 26/23.5 Proposal to engage Ann Wood as Internal Auditor for financial year 2025/2026. This was agreed unanimously.
- 26/23.6 Proposal to adopt the Council's updated Complaints Procedure – a couple of points were raised for checking for the next meeting before it could be approved.
- 26/23.7 Proposal to adopt the Council's Councillor Vacancy and Co-option Procedure. Cllr Winter proposed this was adopted and Cllr Daines seconded this. The Council's Councillor Vacancy and Co-option Procedure was assigned and adopted.

26/24. Upcoming events

- 26/24.1 Annual village Litter Pick, 18th April 2026 – loan of equipment has been arranged. The event will be advertised in the newsletter and on Facebook.

26/25. Correspondence Received:

- 26/25.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler - circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 26/25.2 St Margaret's School – enquiry received as to ownership of the wall behind the school. Cllr Edwards-Holmes will take the action to find out who owns the boundary wall.
- 26/25.3 Essex County Council – Passenger Transport - Outcome of the Local Bus Consultation 2025 has been finalised and published.

You can view the full decision report, appendices, and decision summaries at the link below:

[Local Bus Consultation 2025 Consultation - Background and Final Outcome | Travel Essex](#)

26/26. Financial Accounts:

- 26/26.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and Cllr Edwards-Holmes proposed they were accepted. Payments as detailed in Appendix A were agreed and signed by Cllrs Daines and Neale.
- 26/26.2 To consider quotes received for council's website / domain name. Following discussion on the quotes Cllr Daines proposed to engage L Finch and Cllr Neale seconded this.
- 26/26.3 Proposal to progress the transferring of the Parish Council Bank account. Cllr Neale proposed this and Cllr Graves seconded the motion. Clerk to progress the transferring of the account.

26/27 Highways:

26/27.1 Puddle along Church Lane by the village hall/recycling bins reported - Reference Number: [4013349](#)

Inspection outcome: 'We have risk assessed this enquiry and determined that it does not need immediate action. We have recorded this issue and will continue to monitor the area during future inspections. If the issue further deteriorates, we will consider including it in any future works in the area.'

Clerk to find out if there is a maintenance schedule for Toppesfield and Gainsford End.

26/28. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
25/02782/VAR	Variation of Condition 2 (Approved plans) of approved application 25/01698/FUL granted 31.10.25 for: Proposed change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian & erection of stables. Amendment would allow:-Internal alterations to reduce the number of stable rooms, and alterations to fenestration.	Land North East Of Fairy Farm Toppesfield Road Wethersfield	Pending consideration

26/29. Communications:

26/29.1 Newsletter for March / April 2026 – articles to be submitted by 16th February 2026.

26/30. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Cllr Graves asked if there was an appetite to run a summer fete for the community along the lines of VE Day celebrations. Cllr Graves will ask the church if they are interested and an item will be placed on the March agenda for this to be discussed.

Electrical inspection has been carried out but the report has not yet been received.

Cllr Neale has given his apologies in advance as he will not be able to attend the March meeting.

A letter was received from the school inviting Councillors to their coffee afternoons and Maggie's Museum to see the children's work. Cllr Edwards-Holmes will attend the coffee afternoon on 27th February.

26/31. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday 5th March 2026 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

26/32. Close

Cllr Edwards-Holmes closed the meeting at 8.35pm

Signed:

Dated:

- Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.
- Cllr Neale to follow up on quotes to carry out the work on the RoSPA action list.
- Cllr Graves to look at setting up a charity bank account.
- Cllr Smith to mark out the area the school council are hoping to use for the wildflower project.
- Cllr Edwards-Holmes to find out who owns the boundary wall between the school and the playing field.
- Clerk to find out if there is a maintenance schedule for Toppesfield and Gainsford End.

Appendix A

Accounts - 5th February 2026				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 4th February 2026		£38,027.68	
All previous authorised payments issued balance should be				
			£38,035.66	
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 4th February 2026				
13.01.26	Pockit Ltd		£0.02	
Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 4th February 2026				
02.02.26	EDF - Pavilion electric		£8.00	
			£0.00	
			£8.00	
Direct Debits to be taken this month				
07.02.26	Vodaphone contract		£14.68	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Payment Method		
19.01.26	EALC - Data Protection Essentials Online training	By Bacs	£20.40	£0.00
12.01.26	Re-imbusement to Cllr Edwards-Holmes for Dr Car Service volunteer gifts	By Bacs	£92.25	£0.00
13.01.26	Eden Print - printing of January/February newsletter	By Bacs	£250.00	£0.00
01.02.26	K Berry - January salary	By Bacs	£784.71	£0.00
01.02.26	HMRC - Tax on January salary	By Bacs	£6.60	£0.00
			£1,168.64	
			£36,859.04	