



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th December 2024 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

24/172. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

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

Also, in attendance:

No members of the public were present
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

24/173.1 To accept apologies from members of the council.

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Bourlet and Councillor Amanda Smith as they both had work commitments.

Apologies were also received from District Councillor Richard van Dulken.

24/174. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

No declaration of interests were made at this meeting.

24/175. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

No information was reported during the open session.

24/176. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council meeting held on 7th November 2024.

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

24/177. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

Following the Clerks attendance on a Supporting Communities meeting it was agreed to ask on of Braintree District Councils partners to arrange a visit to the parish with a healthcare vehicle for parishioners to use. Details will be provided once the service has been arranged.

24/177. Actions from previous meeting:

24/177.1 Cllr Bourlet to follow up with Alan Collard regarding funding for digitalising historic records – no update available. Hold over to the next meeting.

24/177.2 Cllrs Bourlet, Winter to arrange and meet with a third representatives regarding possibilities for the playing field – no update available. Hold over to the next meeting.

24/177.3 Cllr Bourlet to research funding for the playing field project – no update available. Hold over to the next meeting.

24/177.4 Cllr Bourlet to report back to the playing field group with response from the Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch – no update available. Hold over to the next meeting.

24/177.5 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. Hold over to the next meeting as action is ongoing.

- 24/177.6 Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project – no update available. Hold over to the next meeting as action is ongoing.
- 24/177.7 Christmas event actions detailed in minute reference 24/163.6. These will be discussed under agenda point 24/178.4.
- 24/177.8 Clerk to sign up to the National Association of Local Councils Civility & Respect Pledge on behalf of the parish council. Toppesfield Parish Council have now signed up to this and Cllr Edwards-Holmes signed the pledge on behalf of the council.
- 24/177.9 Clerk to seek clarification of the internal auditor position and costs. It was agreed that the Clerk will seek quotes for an internal auditor.

24/178. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 24/178.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. Cllr Neale reviewed the joint neighbourhood plan between Finchingfield and Wethersfield and found no issues relating to Toppesfield Parish. However, it was agreed to invite them to the February council meeting to give a short presentation to update the council.
- 24/178.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received. The November WASC meeting was postponed until 27 January 2025 so no updates were available.
- 24/178.3 Tree planting project – verbal update to be given by Cllr Graves to determine actions to progress the project. No progress has been made – hold over to next meeting.
- 24/178.4 Christmas Event – verbal updates previous actions and final preparations to be confirmed. All previous actions have been completed. Further lights have been purchased for the Pumpouse to illuminate it as the others were required for the tree. Due to the weather forecast for the day some locations of events have been changed but the team of volunteers are being kept updated with changes.
- 24/178.5 Parish Council Strategy document – comments to be received from Councillors regarding the draft document. It was agreed to hold this item to the next meeting as Cllr Bourlet is taking the lead on this.
- 24/178.6 Coffee Morning 25 January 2025 – determine actions for the event. It was agreed to hold the next coffee morning on the 8th of February 2025 from 10am – 12pm and advertise it in the next Newsletter and on Facebook to encourage people to attend.
- 24/178.7 Dates for Parish Council meetings for 2024 to be agreed. It was agreed to hold the parish council meetings on the first Thursday of each month expect for January which will be held on the second Thursday of the month.

24/179. Correspondence Received:

- 24/179.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 24/179.2 Gosfield Neighbourhood Plan pre-submission draft. To fulfil their obligations under regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Gosfield Parish Council are publicising the publication for consultation. The consultation runs from the 8th November until 3rd January 2025. Should you have any questions or wish to make any representations, please email the Gosfield Parish Clerk on parishclerk@gosfieldparishcouncil.org.
- 24/179.3 Braintree District Council Call for sites – additional site submitted. As with the previously notified sites, this site will now be subject to assessment by officers who will consider suitability for future development. Once the assessment process has been completed, sites will be considered by the Local Plan Sub Committee in spring 2025. Formal public consultation on the sites will then be carried out. Additional site:

Ref	Proposed Use	Site Address
TOPP2426	Housing/Affordable Housing	Land West of the Causeway Toppesfield

Comments from the Parish Council in relation to this site to be submitted by mid-January. It was agreed to hold this over to the next meeting in order to welcome residents to attend and give their views for parish council to provide a more comprehensive response.

- 24/179.5 Open Spaces Society – Request for financial support received. It was agreed not to give financial support at this time.

24/180. Financial Accounts:

- 24/180.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and Cllr Edwards-Holmes proposed they were accepted, and this was seconded by Cllr Daines. Payments are detailed in Appendix A.
- 24/180.2 Draft budget for 2025/2026 circulated for consideration and discussion. This was discussed and it was agreed Cllr Neale will review in more detail and circulate revised figures for consideration.
- 24/180.3 Appointment of Internal Auditor – determine actions to engage an internal auditor. It was agreed that the clerk will seek quotes for an internal auditor.

24/181 Highways:

- 24/181.1 Park Lane Car Park – update on progression of potential sale. It was mutually agreed, between the resident who was looking to purchase part of the park car and the parish council not to progress with the sale. This matter is now closed.

24/182. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
24/02179/LBC	Replacement of all existing single glazed windows with new double glazed windows.	Scotneys Farm House Scotneys Lane Great Yeldham CO9 4HG	Braintree District Council Decision Application Granted
24/02052/HH	Installation of an air-source heat pump	19 Stambourne Road Toppesfield CO9 4DG	Braintree District Council Decision Application Granted

24/183. Communications:

No items were discussed under this heading.

24/184. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Update to be provided on work in the playing field – Cllr Winter

VE Day 80th Anniversary celebration event to be discussed at the February 2025 meeting – Cllr Graves

Discuss whether the Parish Council could hold the monies for the ancient Toppesfield educational charities (this is a few hundred pounds, and there are only a handful of transactions per year) in the PC bank account – Cllr Graves.

Discuss whether to approach the Sainsbury Charity for a donation on a large village project – such as Pumphouse, Children's play area etc. – Cllr Graves.

Cllr Edwards-Holmes asked the Clerk to check the Financial Regulations regarding delegated powers and to look into the Working From Home Allowance (WFHA).

24/185. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 9th January 2025 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

24/186. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- Cllr Bourlet to follow up with Alan Collard regarding funding for digitalising historic records.
- Cllrs Bourlet, Winter to arrange and meet with a third representatives regarding possibilities for the playing field.
- Cllr Bourlet to research funding for the playing field project.
- Cllr Bourlet to report back to the playing field group with response from the Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch.
- 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 ne be required.
- Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.
- Clerk to seek quotes for an internal auditor.
- Cllr Neale to review draft budget and circulate revised figures for consideration.
- Clerk to check the Financial Regulations regarding delegated powers and to look into the Working from Home Allowance (WFHA).

Appendix A

Accounts - 5th December 2024				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 3rd December 2024		38,473.31	
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£38,473.31</u>	
Income Received				
			£0.00	
			<u>£0.00</u>	
Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 3rd December 2024				
02.12.24	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£8.00	
02.12.24	Information Commissioner's Office - Data Protection Registration Renewal		£35.00	
			<u>£43.00</u>	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
25.11.24	EALC - Counillors training course	By Bacs	£474.30	
various	K Bourlet - reimbursement for Christmas Decorations	By Bacs	£134.57	£0.00
20.11.24	SLCC - Membership renewal 2025	By Bacs	£150.00	£0.00
02.12.24	HMRC - Tax on November salary	By Bacs	£68.60	£0.00
02.12.24	K Berry - November salary	By Bacs	£864.67	£0.00
			<u>£1,692.14</u>	
			£36,781.17	