



Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on Thursday 5th June 2025 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

25/90. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet
Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Frances Winter
Councillor Chris Neale

Also, in attendance:

District Cllr Richard van Dulken

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Jane Daines
Councillor Jeremy Graves
County Councillor Peter Schwier

25/90.1 To accept apologies from members of the council.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Daines who was unable to attend the meeting due to illness and Cllr Graves who was unable to attend due to family commitments.

25/91. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

No declaration of members interests were made at this meeting.

25/92. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- Braintree District Council (BDC) have 5 leisure facilities who are changing supplier from the 1st September 2025.
- Waste & Recycling - at the cabinet meeting on 25th July 2025 it was agreed the changes to waste bins and collections will come into effect from June 2026 and communications regarding this will be sent to each household.
- Local Plan, call for sites. The sites submitted for Toppesfield will be discussed on 25th June 2025.
- Grants – Cllr van Dulken was not able to support the VE Day grant application but will look at supporting another project this year.
- Other grants available from BDC are the cost-of-living grant scheme and the Rural England prosperity fund. More information about these can be found on their website.

25/93. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council meeting held on 1st May 2025.

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

25/94. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

The lack of lighting from the centre of the village to Camoise Close was raised as there is no footpath for people to walk along – Cllr Edwards-Holmes will contact Highways to see if there could be a solution to this.

It was mentioned that the hedge that runs along the junction of Great Yeldham Road and The Causeway is encroaching into the road and is obscuring a clear view for traffic. It was agreed that an article will be placed in the newsletter and on Facebook reminding people of the rules around hedges and the roadside.

25/95. Actions from previous meeting:

- 25/95.1 Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records. No update - hold over to next meeting.
- 25/95.2 Clerk to report the missing gate sign at Gainsford End Gate sign to Essex County Council Highways. Reported – reference number 2975050.
- 25/95.3 Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project. No progress – hold over to next meeting.
- 25/95.4 Cllr Neale to look at depreciation percentages on the asset register. Action no longer required.
- 25/95.5 Cllr Edwards-Holmes to contact the insurance provider regarding the renewal quote. Contact was made and several points raised/ discussed, however new quote has not yet been received.

25/96. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 25/96.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. Cllr Neale will liaise with Alan Collard/David Oxnam re next steps and public consultation.
- 25/96.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received. The latest WASC minutes have been circulated to councillors.
- 25/96.3 Playfield update / progress on funding / quotes / work carried out. Cllrs Bourlet and Winter are still to meet up to discuss quotes and agree what is required.
- 25/96.4 Strategy Document – feedback on responses received so far. 15 responses have been received so far, a reminder will be put on Facebook and an article in the next newsletter with an extended date to the end of July. Responses will be discussed at the August meeting.
- 25/96.5 Emergency Plan Reviewed and proposal to approve. This was discussed, Cllr Edwards-Holmes proposed the plan was approved and Cllr Neale seconded this. This was agreed by everyone present.
- 25/96.6 Toppesfield Parish Council Risk Assessment – review and proposal to approve. A couple of amendments required before approval.
- 25/96.7 Gainsford End phone box – volunteer has offered to repaint it if required. It was agreed to accept the offer and for the Clerk to see if paint for the Gainsford End telephone box can be scoured through Community Heartbeat Trust.
- 25/96.8 Doctor Car service - to review the process of the service. A volunteer WhatsApp group has been set up. Cllr Edwards-Holmes will produce an updated process for the service and circulate to councillors for review.
- 25/96.9 Electrical inspection required for all parish council property – proposal to seek quotes and engage a contractor to carry out the work. Clerk to seek three quotes for the work to include the village hall, parish office, pumphouse, pavilion and the shop.
- 25/96.10 Outcome of internal audit – discuss report and determine actions. Report not received prior to the meeting but a summary was given to the councillors.

25/97. Upcoming events

- 25/97.1 VE Day celebrations – feedback on event. People enjoyed the day and the event was very well supported. The village hall committee did not charge for the use of tables and chairs for the event. More communication is needed between committee members and volunteers.
- 25/97.2 Christmas Event – decorations and budgets to be discussed. It was agreed that no baubles will be used due to them getting blown off the tree but more lights will be added. Electricians at the pump will need looking at. The Green Man are happy to do the refreshments again this year. A grotto could be set up in the village hall and Cllr Graves to enquire about the availability of the sleigh. The school will also be approached if the children could sing by the tree or in the village hall. Music will be set up from the barn if wet and the pub committee agree to this. Cllr Bourlet to update the Christmas plan.

25/98. Correspondence Received:

- 25/98.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 25/98.2 The Integrated Passenger Transport Unit are preparing to launch their annual bus survey. The

online bus survey will be available from 2nd June to 30th June 2025. The face-to-face survey will take place from 16th June to 27th June 2025 at the following locations:

- Basildon
- Billericay
- Chelmsford
- Colchester
- Harlow

You can complete the survey at: [Essex Bus User Survey 2025 - Essex County Council](#)

25/98.3 Verbal request from parishioner – can the dog waste bin on the school wall in the playing field be moved down a little further so it is not where the parents gather or under the school swap box. Also, can the ditch along the bottom end of the graveyard needs clearing all the way to the pond in the corner of the playing field. The school gardening club will be asked if they can move the swap box further down the wall as it was felt the dog bin is in the right place for the playing field. The owner of the field to be identified and asked to clear the ditches.

25/99. Financial Accounts:

- 25/99.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and Cllr Edwards-Holmes proposed they were accepted except for the insurance payment as the revised quote had not been received, and this was seconded by Cllr Smith. Payments are detailed in Appendix A. The payment schedule was signed by Cllrs Bourlet and Neale.
- 25/99.2 Updating of Asset Register 2025 – discuss depreciation figures and determine any further actions or approve. Depreciation is not to be recorded but Cllr Neale to seek advice on figure for the village hall.
- 25/99.3 Insurance renewal quote received. Proposal to accept the quote received. Revised quote not received.
- 25/99.4 Accounts for year 2024/25.

To approve the accounts and sign the Annual Return, for the year ending 31 March 2025.

The Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer/Clerk to sign:

- Annual Governance Statement.
- Accounting Statements.

This item will be discussed at a separate parish council meeting once the internal auditors report has been received. Date to be arranged.

25/100 Highways:

- 25/100.1 Village sign gate at Gainsford End – reference 2975050 – response from Highways was “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”.
- 25/100.2 Stumps Cross junction road sign – reference 2955054 – response from Highways was “We have investigated, risk assessed and recorded this issue, and we are in the process of scheduling works”.
- 25/100.3 Quys/Elms Farm junction road sign – reference 2955055 – response from Highways was “We have investigated, risk assessed and recorded this issue, and we are in the process of scheduling work”.
- 25/100.4 Gainsford End Road – dip in the road – reference 2975057 – Highways inspection outcome was “Thank you for getting in touch with Essex Highways to raise an enquiry. We have assessed your report. However, we have determined that the issue it does not meet our minimum requirements to be recorded as a defect at this time or the issue may have already been resolved. During our routine safety inspections the area will be monitored to check if it has deteriorated. A future inspection may result in a new defect being raised. This particular enquiry will be closed and you will not receive any further updates on it”.
- 25/100.4 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(1). Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of North End Road, Gestingthorpe. Please see the following link <https://one.network/?tm=139618682> to find details of the intended closure of North End Road, due to commence on 1st September 2025 for 23 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council undertakes drainage.

25/101. 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	Braintree District Council Decision Pending consideration
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	Braintree District Council Decision Pending consideration

The above applications were for report only – decisions on these applications are yet to be determined.

25/102. Communications:

No items were discussed under this item.

25/103. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

No items were discussed under this item.

25/104. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 3rd July 2025 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

25/105. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.40pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- Cllr Edwards-Holmes to contact Highways regarding lighting of roads from the centre of the village to Camoise Close.
- Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records.
- Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.
- Clerk to speak to Community Heartbeat Trust regarding paint for the Gainsford End telephone box.
- Cllr Edwards-Holmes to draft a revised process for the Doctors car service and circulate to all Councillors for review.

Appendix A

Accounts - 5th June 2025				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 4th June 2025		£41,173.78	
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£41,182.66</u>	
	Vodafone contract increased in May by 88 pence therefore account balance should have been		£41,181.78	
Income Received	Included in the balance figure of 4th June 2025			
			<u>£0.00</u>	
Direct Debits	Included in the balance figure of 4th June 2025			
02.06.25	EDF - Psvilion electric		£8.00	
			<u>£8.00</u>	
Direct Debits	To be taken this month			
			£0.00	
07.06.25	Vodafone contract		£14.68	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
01.05.25	Re-imbursemnt to Cllr Edwards-Holmes for Dr Car service expense	By Bacs	£115.00	£0.00
26.04.25	Toppesfield Village Hall Committee - quarterly charge and meeting hire	By Bacs	£319.50	£0.00
25.04.25	Clear Councils - Insurance renewal	By Bacs	£1,150.98	
various	K Berry re-imbursement for envelopes for stratergy document drop, paper and station	By Bacs	£26.67	£0.00
various	Cllr Graves - re-imbursement for VE Day expenses	By Bacs	£319.05	
31.05.25	HMRC - Tax on May salary	By Bacs	£1.60	£0.00
31.05.25	K Berry - May salary	By Bacs	£765.14	£0.00
			<u>£2,697.94</u>	
			£38,461.16	