



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 6th February 2020 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 7.30pm

20/19. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Bull – Vice Chair
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Andrea Chinery
Councillor Boyd Page
Councillor Chris Neale
Councillor Robert Stafford-Baker

Also, in attendance:

There was 1 member of the public in attendance.
County Councillor David Finch
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies were received from:
Councillor Alan Collard - Chair

20/20. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

No declarations of Members interests were made.

20/21. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Councillor David Finch confirmed that tenders for the work on Cust Hall bridge will be sent out in the new financial year and works will commence in the summer 2020 which will last approximately 8 weeks. It was questioned if there will still be a weight restriction in place after the works are complete on the bridge – David Finch to look into this.

Councillor David Finch confirmed that County Broadband are not part of the superfast broadband that Essex County Council are involved with and notes the letter the parish council sent him regarding the problems being experienced with the current works being undertaken by County Broadband.

Councillor Finch stated extra monies are being made available to repair pot holes across Essex and some farmers have been approached to clear ditches to help with the issues of flooding.

Councillor Finch also talked about the items in his January update – see appendix A.

A resident stated that County Broadband will be putting two telegraph poles either side of the entrance to Camoise Close. He confirmed that he spoke to the contractor who was not helpful - and County Broadband who confirmed they have permission to put them in but if people are not happy with this then an email could be sent to County Broadband who would consider the views made. The resident also spoke to Braintree District Council and was advised to speak to the Duty Planner when they are available.

A notice of how to complain will be placed on the poles by the contractor.

Follow up calls will be made by the resident to Braintree District Council and Councillor Chris Neale will see if anything else can be done.

20/22. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2020 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

20/23. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

A letter of complaint has been sent to County Broadband regarding the current works in the village.

A notice of the percentage increase of the parish element for the precept for 2020/21 has been received from Braintree District Council - this is 5.62% increase for a band D property.

The scope of work on the Cherry Trees along The Causeway had to be changed due to one tree being in a worse condition than had been originally advised. One of the trees was advised to be removed due to an advance fungal disease. This was approved by assent via WhatsApp from a majority of the Parish Council – this did not alter the cost of the project.

Councillors Page and Stafford-Baker have cleared leaves from the access road to the playing fields and helped to tidy up the Churchyard. The concrete base for the bench in the playing field has been prepared and ready for concreting and then the old bench will be replaced.

20/24. Actions from previous meeting:

- 20/24.1 Councillor Neale to enquire about the repair required to the telephone box door at Gainsford End. The door has been removed and will be repaired by Councillor Stafford-Baker and will be replaced as soon as possible.
- 20/24.2 Councillor Rob Stafford-Baker to seek further quotes to repair the village gate on the Great Yeldham Road and its possible redesign. The village signs have been looked at and appear to be in a good stated. Councillor Stafford-Baker will repair the damaged gate.
- 20/24.3 Councillors Page to enquire if a speed limit sign can be incorporated into the village gate design. Councillor Page is still looking into this and has emailed Highways to enquire about the legality of the signs.

20/25. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 20/25.1 Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor Page reported that a drop in event will be held in the village hall on the 21st March from 10.30am - 2.30pm to promote the Neighbourhood Plan and answer any questions regarding the Housing Needs Survey which will be going out at the beginning of March.
- 20/25.2 Discussion on environmental issues: update re Trees, Charging points, Refilling centre and Community electricity. Councillor Neale reported the meeting he had arranged had to be postponed but Charge Master will come out to view possible locations and quote for installing charging points. Councillor Page reported 3 landowners have expressed an interest in planting trees on their land.
- 20/25.3 Update on repairing Gainsford End Telephone Box door – see agenda item 20/24.1. An electrician will also be looking at the phone box with regards to installing the defibrillator and submitting a quote.
- 20/25.4 Annual Parish Meeting – it was proposed this will be held on the 23rd April 2020 dependent on the village hall availability. The format was discussed and clerk to draft a format and circulate to all Councillors for comment.

The April and May Parish Councils meetings were discussed as dates to be changed to allow clerk to attend the April one and upcoming elections in May. Proposed dates will be 1st April and 14th May 2020 dependant on the availability of the village hall.

20/26. Correspondence Received:

- 20/26.1 EALC Legal and County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 20/26.2 Braintree District Council – Community Marketplace event – 19th February 2020, 1.30pm – 3.00pm. Find out about your community and what it has to offer. Exhibitors will be showcasing voluntary, community & business services available throughout the Braintree District.
- 20/26.3 Councillor Finch's Parish Update January 2020 received – see Appendix A.
- 20/26.4 RCCE – Neighbourhood Plan training session – Reg 14 and Beyond will be held on Wednesday 12th February 2020 from 10.30am – 1.15pm at Fyfield Village Hall, Houchin Drive, Fyfield. Forwarded to the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan committee.
- 20/26.5 Essex County Council - Twelve Local Authorities in Essex are currently working together to produce an Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Supplementary

Planning Document (SPD). An Essex Coast RAMS Strategy Document has been prepared and this includes a technical report and mitigation strategy for how the Essex local authorities will avoid and mitigate the in-combination effects of increased recreational disturbance on Essex coast Habitats sites. Consultation runs until 5pm on 21 February 2020.

- 20/26.6 Braintree District Council – Open Space Action Plan – request for further details regarding the allotments. Information to be supplied to Braintree District Council.
- 20/26.7 National Association of Local Councils - NALC will be holding its [Spring Conference](#) on 17 March 2020 at the Aviva Auditorium, London and the theme will be health and wellbeing. Invitation to Co-deliver Session with ECC and EALC. This was discussed and Councillor Collard has offered to attend to represent the Parish Council.

Late Correspondence:

Essex Association of Local Councils – invitation to Health and Wellbeing Conference April 22nd 2020 at Foakes Hall – Councillor Collard has offered to attend to represent the Parish Council.

20/27. Financial Accounts:

- 20/27.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and payments approved – see Appendix B.
- 20/27.2 To receive and discuss quotes for play equipment for Gainsford End playing field. Councillor Stafford-Baker presented the 4 quotes received. These were discussed - it was proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Chinery that Sovereign's quote be accepted. This was agreed by those present. Councillor Stafford-Baker to progress.

20/28. Highways:

- 20/28.1 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Gainsford End Road, Toppesfield. Please see <https://one.network/?tm=116047456> to find details of the intended closure of Gainsford End Road, due to commence on 17th February 2020 for 12 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while County Broadband LTD undertakes installation of fibre broadband.
- 20/28.2 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Dyers End, Finchingfield Road, Robinhood End, Finchingfield Road, Stambourne. Please see <https://one.network/?tm=115887981> to find details of the intended closure of Dyers End, Finchingfield Road, Robinhood End, Finchingfield Road, due to commence on 5th March 2020 for 16 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while County Broadband LTD undertakes fibre broadband installation.
- 20/28.3 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Gainsford End, Gainsford Hall Road, Gainsford End Road, Toppesfield. Please see <https://one.network/?tm=116179162> to find details of the intended closure of Gainsford End, Gainsford Hall Road, Gainsford End Road, due to commence on 4th May 2020 for 19 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while County Broadband LTD undertakes installation of fibre broadband.
- 20/28.4 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Carters Hill, Toppesfield. Please see <https://one.network/?tm=116127163> to find details of the intended closure of Carters Hill, due to commence on 13th April 2020 for 2 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while County Broadband LTD undertakes installation of fibre broadband.
- 28/28.5 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Gainsford End Road, Toppesfield. Please see <https://one.network/?tm=116164809> to find details of the intended closure of Gainsford End Road, due to commence on 30th March 2020 for 12 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while County Broadband LTD undertakes installation of fibre broadband.
- 28/28.6 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Great Yeldham Road, Stambourne. Please see <https://one.network/?tm=116127067> to find details of the intended closure of Great Yeldham Road, due to commence on 23rd March 2020 for 5 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while County Broadband LTD undertakes installation of fibre network.

20/29. Planning:

- 20/29.1 Planning application 17/01863/OUT – to be considered at Braintree District Council's Planning Committee on 4th February 2020. This application was considered at Braintree's Planning Committee and was refused by them.

20/30. Toppesfield Village Hall

20/30.1 Update from Village Hall Management Committee – Councillor Chinery gave the report, please see Appendix C.

20/31. Playing Fields & The Dick Ruggles Pavilion

20/31.1 Update on Football Club progress – Councillor Smith reported things are still progressing and part of her course has been completed and should be finished by the summer holidays. This will give her a level 1 coaching qualification.

20/31.2 Update on work required to pavilion – Councillor Stafford-Baker suggested that as the pavilion is used for storage a disclaimer is signed by users to confirm they realise that the pavilion is used for storage and they are happy to use the building as it is. Help to find funding sources and complete grant applications are required for works to the pavilion.

20/32. Events

20/32.1 Little Chestnuts Preschool – Circus 2021. Councillor Chinery confirmed Little Chestnuts have booked the Circus and a sponsor has been found. Save the date notices will go out shortly, the date of the circus is 8th May 2021.

20/33. Communications

20/33.1 Website – clerk confirmed that a company called voice. This is a similar to the Essex info host. It was agreed to apply for a website through voice. Clerk to progress.

20/34. Information exchange / Parish Surgery / Items for the next agenda

The next parish surgery will be held on the 7th March 2020 and Councillor's Page and Neale will be available for this.

20/35. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 5th March 2020 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

20/36. Close

The meeting closed at 9.26pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

Councillor Page to update on enquiry to Highways regarding the legality of the signs on village gates.
Clerk to draft a format for the Annual Parish Meeting and circulate to all Councillors for comment.

Appendix A

Cllr Finch's Parish Update – January 2020

Essex County Council Budget 2020/2021:

The Council's Cabinet will meet to approve the proposals on Tuesday 21 January, before they go to Full Council for final approval on Tuesday 11 February.

The proposals include an extra £5million for highways to enable investment in improving the condition of roads and pavements, and new investment in technology to support social care case management, more money to help meeting increased demand for home to school transport and adults and children's social care.

A further, more detailed update will follow after the Full Council meeting.

Essex Climate Change Commission:

ECC is in the process of setting up an independent, cross party Climate Action Commission, which will have a high profile independent chair and representation from ECC Members, academics and experts in their field. This Commission will, over its two year life, make recommendations to the County Council for actions to be taken to help tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions across Essex. Cllr Finch has allocated a reserve of £5m in the budget for the implementation of recommendations from the Commission.

Essex Forest Initiative:

The Essex Forest Initiative was launched in Tree Week on the 23rd November 2019 with Cllr Finch and Andy Wright, the CEO of Braintree Council along with local school children planting 61 trees.

All forestry projects depend on finding the land to plant up and people enthusiastic to improve their environment. ECC will start with our own land and land for approximately 50,000 trees has already been identified. In addition, ECC are working with our partners in the district and borough authorities to plant on their land. As for enthusiastic tree planters, ECC are being contacted by charities, parishes, communities and individuals and are now asking these partners to begin to work up their tree planting proposal so ECC can make a long-term difference to these areas of Essex which will make up the new Essex Forest.

ECC are particularly keen to engage work with the parishes in Essex as we know they are passionate about improving their villages and towns. If you have areas of land where the landowner is happy to plant trees and local people keen to plant the tree then please e-mail environment@essex.gov.uk. The team will send you a form to get all the necessary information for the tree planting scheme and a planting agreement. The Essex Forest Initiative is a 5 year project so ECC will have plenty of time to make a real difference to your local environments and doing our bit for the climate change global challenge.

Essex 2020:

Essex 2020 is an Essex-wide, year-long programme of science and creative events, exhibitions, festivals, performances, workshops, activities and opportunities for every Essex resident to be a part of. It offers a unique opportunity to celebrate Essex's pioneering past and embrace the future to create a sense of identity and pride that can drive prosperity.

Essex 2020 aims to deliver:

350+ events

500,000+ participants

100s of businesses, schools and community organisations taking part.

Residents can check out all the details of events registered so far here at www.Essex2020.com and find out more about the specific events in their area Through the website, organisations and community groups are able to submit expressions of interest/event proposals, so that they too can become a part of this landmark programme.

Parishes are asked to spread the word about this very special year of events and encourage residents to check out the Essex 2020 social media channels:

<https://www.facebook.com/Essex2020>

https://twitter.com/essex_2020

https://www.instagram.com/essex_2020/

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKrZUvwcSerOjfGWfkh0NuQ/about>

All events are being co-designed and supported in partnership with Essex's local communities via the six Essex 2020 'collaborative hubs' of arts, business, education, community and local authority organisations that will steer programming in local areas, with each managed by a lead organisation:

Uttlesford: Stansted Airport College

Chelmsford, Brentwood, Basildon and Maldon: Chelmsford Ignite

Thurrock, Rochford, Southend and Castle Point: Focal Point Gallery

Harlow and Epping Forest: Harlow Creative Ways

Braintree: Braintree Cultural Education

Tendring and Colchester: Signals.

Through participation in science and creativity, Essex 2020 will help deliver *The Future of Essex* ambitions to **Unite behind a sense of identity and Strengthen communities through participation.**

For more information about Essex 2020, please contact Essex2020@alwayspossible.co.uk.

Rough Sleeping:

ECC formed a partnership with four district councils to launch the Essex Rough Sleeper Outreach Service in the summer of 2019. The service operates in Chelmsford, Maldon, Braintree and Epping Forest. The partnership commissioned CHESS, a local voluntary sector provider with a history of expertise in working with local rough sleepers to provide personalised support and accommodation, assisting rough sleepers to break the cycle of homelessness and move into sustained housing. As a result in the first six months the partnership has helped 82 rough sleepers.

If a member of the public is concerned about a rough sleeper they can make a report to Street Link and a trained professional from CHESS will make contact with the individual. Street Link can be contacted via the Street Link app or by going online at <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>.

Homelessness:

ECC recognises that homelessness goes beyond rough sleeping. ECC commissioned the voluntary organisation Peabody in April 2019 to provide advice and support to households at risk of losing their home in the county. Peabody provides people with support and advice on: Money management advice, housing law, attending court, housing benefit and wider benefit advice. Peabody helped over two thousand Essex families and individuals with their housing in the first six months of the financial year.

Essex Housing:

The Essex Housing Team continue to work alongside public sector partners to identify vacant or under-utilised public assets for high quality housing to meet general and specialist needs of Essex residents. Most recently, the scheme at Moulsham Lodge, Chelmsford achieved practical completion on 6 December, generating 18 private and 8 specialist apartments for adults with disabilities to live independently with an on-site carer.

A design team has also been appointed to explore options to redevelop the Shenfield Library site to include a brand-new library building with high spec apartments above. The team will be asked to explore a range of options that will include rebuilding the library to ensure the best use of the space available. We will be working closely with the library service to design the library so that it is a modern, fit for purpose building which is in line with ECC's new library strategy and will better serve the local community. A full costed design will be brought back to members for decision before any action is taken on site.

A planning application has been submitted for a proposed development at Shernbroke, Epping Forest, which will provide 10 specialist apartments for young people transitioning to adult services and 14 private apartments to help meet local housing need. The outcome of the planning application is expected in late January 2020.

Essex Highways Member led footway scheme:

Cllr Kevin Bentley invited all Members at ECC to nominate up to five footway defects for consideration for priority repair - the work, wherever possible was to be resolved in addition to the already scheduled forward capital works programme in place for footways.

Officers have been working hard to assess, schedule and mobilise the resources needed to deliver the repairs Members asked for. ECC's plan has always been to assess the sites identified over the coming months and deliver works to resolve them by the end of the financial year in March 2020.

Children and Families:

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Louise McKinlay is leading on a project to develop a better package for care leavers. This includes improving access to and quality of housing, developing better work experience opportunities for care leavers and reducing the impact of Council Tax on care leavers. At a recent meeting of Leaders and Chief Executives from across Essex, leaders were in agreement to exempt care leavers from council tax up to the age of 21.

Cllr McKinlay also presented an update to the leaders and chief execs on the JAMs (Just about managing) project. This project looks to Help 'hard working families' that sit just above the need for intervention - identified with reference to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Minimum Income Standard (MIS). ECC are currently in the data gathering stage on this project and more information will be available once the data has been analysed.

In February, Cllr McKinlay is holding a workshop with parents and officers to develop a 3 year strategy for overnight respite care for children with disabilities.

Appendix B

Accounts - 6 February 2020					
			£		£
National Savings Deposit Account:					
Balance as at 1st January 2020			<u>£2,646.58</u>		
Community Account					
Balance as at 31 January 2020					<u>£33,942.22</u>
Subtotal:			<u>£2,646.58</u>		
All previous issued cheques cashed balance should be			<u>£2,646.58</u>		<u>£33,942.22</u>
Income Received					
Jan-20	Interest on National Savings account 01.01.19 - 31.12.19 (included in above figure)		£21.01		
Payments to be approved:					
Date of invoice				Chq No:	Unrecoverable VAT
30.09.19*	Toppesfield Village Hall Committee - Neighbourhood Plan meeting - 21.11.19			101915	£18.00 £0.00
31.01.20	Second Nature Tree Services Ltd - Works carried out on Cherry Trees along The Causeway			101916	£600.00 £0.00
various	K Berry - Expenses, ink, stationery & stamps for period March 19 - Jan 20			101917	£126.82 £0.00
10.01.20	CPRE - Annual Membership			101918	£36.00
31.01.20	K Berry - January wages			101914	£380.94 £0.00
					<u>£1,161.76</u>
Balance			<u>£2,646.58</u>		<u>£32,780.46</u>
Last bank statement received up to 31 December 2019					
* original invoice for Toppesfield Village Hall was not received - copy invoice received Jan 2020					

Appendix C

Toppesfield Village Hall Report to Parish Council February 2020

The committee are, again, giving their time to work on the hall. This half term holiday we are decorating the men's toilet and chair storage room.

The next project is to resurface the stage. We are currently seeking quotations.

We had a committee meeting on 31/1/20. Below is an exert (in bold) from the minutes.

– **Re-request for a key by the Parish Council at the last parish council meeting. Sheila read out an email from Andrea,**

– **(see attached).**

This was discussed in depth and we re read the key policy, Sheila presented a list of points to consider relating to past requests for keys and the communication in the past over this.

A vote was taken, and the general consensus is that we do not feel it is necessary for a key to be given to the PC. For everyone who hires the hall, a key is available from Linda. This system has worked extremely well for 3 years. It has been and will continue to be possible for Kaaren to use the facilities when the preschool is in session which is at the times she works.

We cannot understand why the PC feel they need to hold a key to access the hall.

I did bring up this issue to Alan when we met last year and I am disappointed that it still continues after all the reasons have been discussed, explained and I thought agreed.

Given that Kaaren cannot just use a key to walk in on any other hirers session, but is welcome and does ring to use the facilities including having coffee. She and other members of the brewery staff also use the shop. Can you explain why the Parish Council want to hold a key? Would others then have access to use the hall?

Please note that we do not have spare keys. Our limited number ensures we keep the hall secure.

Our AGM is arranged for 17th April 2020 7.30pm.

I would like to inform you that I will not be standing for re-election.