



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 6th June 2024 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

24/84. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet
Councillor Frances Winter
Councillor Jane Daines

Also, in attendance:

County Councillor Peter Schwier
District Councillor Richard van Dulken
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes
Councillor Jeremy Graves

24/85. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

There were no declarations of interests reported.

24/86. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

County Councillor Peter Schwier reported:

- Due to the upcoming general election meetings at County and Braintree District Council (BDC) may be changed.
- Highways Highlights publication was circulated today and includes information about Essex Highways 2024 road resurfacing programme. There will be a lot of diversions so drivers will need to be aware of possible delays.
- National grid Norwich – Tilbury Consultation. Residents and businesses across Essex are being urged to share their views on the widespread impact expected from proposals to install pylons, cabling and substations throughout the county. Consultation has been extended to Friday 26 July. Residents and businesses can take part in the consultation via the [National Grid website](#).
- 60 new bleed control kits are being set up across Essex as part of the county council's community safety efforts.
- Community Safety Survey asks Essex residents to voice priorities in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Residents can take part in this year's Community Safety Survey until 30 June 2024 at https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/equalities-and-partnership/community_safety_survey_2024
- More than 4,000 residents have their say on Replacement Essex Minerals Local Plan. These comments will be reviewed and the amended plan will be published alongside a draft list of Preferred Site allocations. The amended plan will be subject to further consultation in the Autumn/Winter this year.

District councillor van Dulken reported:

- There has been a cabinet meeting at BDC and Braintree town is having a Public Spaces Protection Order being brought into effect.

- That he has visited the Wethersfield site and there was a pretty calm atmosphere. There are currently 580 residents. BDC have withdrawn their appeal against the Special Development Order (SDO).
- Flooding – Grants are available, up to £8500 for residents to improve their flood defences. More information can be found at [Essex Flood and Water Management](https://www.essex.gov.uk/essex-flood-and-water-management) (flood.essex.gov.uk).
- There is a Cost of Living director which is full of advice available on the BDC website at: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/costofliving>

24/87. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

Cllr Bourlet proposed the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th May 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting and Cllr Daines seconded this.

24/88. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

There were no matters arising.

24/89. Actions from previous meeting:

- 24/89.1 Cllr Bourlet to liaise with Alan Collard regarding progress made for funding for digitalising historic photographs/documents. Item to be carried forward.
- 24/89.2 Cllr Bourlet & Winter to arrange and meet with a third representatives regarding possibilities for the playing field. Cllr Winter to arrange a third quote. What is to be included in it needs to be established and agreed.
- 24/89.3 Cllr Bourlet to research funding for the playing field project. Some funding bodies have been identified. Item to be carried forward as further research required.
- 24/89.4 Cllr Bourlet & Winter to meet with a Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch. Contact has been made but meeting not yet arranged.
- 24/89.5 Clerk to progress agreed mobile phone contract. This has been set up.
- 24/89.6 Cllr Graves to install the dog poop bag dispensers. These will be installed this weekend.
- 24/89.7 Clerk to find out dates for J9 training for Councillors. Cllr Bourlet has signed up for a training session. Further dates required for other councillors to take part in the training.

24/90. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 24/90.1 Neighbourhood Plan update - no update available, carry forward.
- 24/90.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre update - minutes from the WASC meetings were circulated to Councillors and are available on the Parish Council website.
- 24/90.3 Playing fields Plan – update on obtaining quotes for consideration. Cllr Winter met with the RoSPA inspector and talk through areas that need attention. Cllr Winter to seek a quote for the maintenance work required.
- 24/90.4 Co-option of Councillor, official confirmation that the council can co-opt should be received this week.
- 24/90.5 Verge Cutting - request to carry out the first cut of the year. This was agreed, clerk to progress.
- 24/90.6 Training for parish Councillors. It was agreed to arrange a 2 hour training session for Councillors with EALC. It is important that all Councillors attend. Clerk to seek dates and times from EALC.
- 24/90.7 Review of Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct required. Clerk to review and circulate for Councillor comments.

24/91. Correspondence Received:

- 24/91.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 24/91.2 The Minutes of the meeting of Braintree Local Highways Panel, held on 29th April 2024 are available to view on the Council's website at the following link:-
<https://braintree.cmis.uk.com/braintree/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1455/Committee/13/Default.aspx>
- 24/91.3 Request for the Parish Council to support campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries (used in e-bike and e-scooters) and their disposal. Lord Foster and Electrical Safety First are promoting a Bill to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries and are aiming to get it into law as soon as possible. The parish council agreed in principle to support this but more information is required on what support is being sought.
- 24/91.4 Essex Highways - Salt Bag Partnership Scheme for Winter 2024/25 has been launched. Does the

Parish Council wish to participate and requires salt, or participate but has enough salt left due to the mild winter or won't be taking part. Response required by the closing date of 22nd July 2024. It was agreed not to take part this year as there is enough salt left from last year.

24/91.5 University of Essex – Invitation to the Chair to attend The University’s Annual Meeting and Summer Reception, on 27th June 2024. The Chair is not able to attend.

24/91.2 GRIDSERVE Electric Forecourt® in Braintree – invitation to attend a site tour. Clerk to ask Cllr Graves if he would like to attend.

24/92. Financial Accounts:

24/92.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was Received, Cllr Bourlet proposed that all payments were approved, and this was seconded by Cllr Daines. See Appendix for full details of payments.

24/92.2 Accounts for year 2023/24. The report was received and payments approved. This was To approve the accounts and sign the Annual Return, for the year ending 31 March 2024. The Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer/Clerk to sign:

- Annual Governance Statement.
- Accounting Statements.

The Annual Return forms were completed, and the statements signed.

24/93 Highways:

24/93.1 Park Lane Car Park – update on progression of potential sale and other options. Item to be carried forward to next meeting. Cllr Graves to look at options.

24/93.2 Footway defect reported in Church Lane (metal spike appearing in path). Reference number 2920600.

24/94. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
24/00987/HH	Single storey rear extension	14 Stambourne Road Toppesfield CO9 4DG	Comments to Braintree District Council by 10 th June 2024
24/01136/AGR	Application for prior notification of agricultural or forestry development - Erection of agricultural grain store	Flowers Hall Farm Gainsford End CO9 4EN	For information only. Due to the type of application, BDC are unable to accept third party comments.
24/00894/HH	Installation of 24No. solar panels to barn	The Stables Park Lane Toppesfield CO9 4DQ	Braintree District Council planning decision: Pending consideration

Planning application 24/00987/HH was discussed and the parish council support the application.

24/95. Communications:

No items were discussed under this heading.

24/96. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Items for July’s agenda – update on meeting with representatives from the Village Hall and Shop committees as to a way forward for the shops garden project.

24/97. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 10th July 2024 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall due to a general election being held on the 4th July 2024.

24/98. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.25pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- Cllr Bourlet to liaise with Alan Collard regarding progress made for funding for digitalising historic photographs/documents.
- Cllr 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 & Winter to meet with a Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch.
- Cllr Graves to give update on locations of the dog poop bag dispensers.
- Clerk to find out further dates for J9 training for Councillors.
- Cllr Winter seek quote for maintenance work required at the playing fields.
- Clerk to review Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct and circulate to Councillors for comment.
- Cllr Graves to look at options for the car park in Park Lane.

Appendix A

Accounts -6th June 2024				
			£	
Community Account				
	Closing Balance as at 3rd June 2024		34,805.80	
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£34,503.80</u>	
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 6th May 2024				
28.05.24	BDC - Grant for dog poo bags and bag dispensers		£312.00	
			<u>£312.00</u>	
Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 6th May 2024				
01.06.24	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00	
			£0.00	
			<u>£10.00</u>	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
24.05.24	Saffron Accounting Services - annual accounts, annual return and internal audit year ending 31 March 2024	By Bacs	£150.00	
25.08.23	Saffron Accounting Services - annual accounts, annual return and internal audit year ending 31 March 2023. Email sent to the incorrect address therefore invoice not received	By Bacs	£150.00	
various	K Bourlet - Christmas event and Easter Egg Hunt re-imburement	By Bacs	£67.60	
05.06.24	RoSPA - Playingfields inspections	By Bacs	£266.40	
01.06.24	HMRC - Tax on April salary	By Bacs	£30.60	£0.00
01.06.24	K Berry - May salary	By Bacs	£712.35	£0.00
			<u>£1,376.95</u>	
			£33,428.85	