



# **Toppesfield Parish Council**

## **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm**

### **25/33. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:**

#### **The following Councillors were in attendance:**

Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes  
Councillor Frances Winter  
Councillor Chris Neale  
Councillor Amanda Smith  
Councillor Jeremy Graves

Also, in attendance:

District Cllr Richard van Dulken  
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

### **25/33.1 To accept apologies from members of the council.**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Kitty Bourlet and Councillor Jane Daines. Both apologies were due to prior commitments.

Apologies were also received from County Councillor Peter Schwier.

### **25/34. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items**

Councillor Edwards-Holmes declared an interest in agenda point 25/39.4.

### **25/35. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.**

Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- Hedingham Medical Centre – details on progress of the project have been circulated and publicised by Braintree District Council
- There will be an extraordinary meeting held at Braintree District Council following the consultation to
- seeks views on a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council (referred to as Greater Essex in this consultation). Details on this can be found using the following link:  
<http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/greater-essex-devolution>
- The Waste consultation has now closed. There were 7500 responses which are now being analysed.

### **25/36. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025.**

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

### **25/37. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.**

Cllr Neale has sent a follow up email to Cllr Schwier regarding meeting a surveyor about the state of Toppesfield Road. No response has been received as yet.

### **25/38. Actions from previous meeting:**

25/38.1 Clerk to send follow up letter to Hedingham Buses and write to Essex transport services to find out what their emergency procedures are. An online complaint form was completed for Hedingham Buses as no response was received from the initial letter sent. Essex Transport have referred the parish council's letter to the Passenger Transport Team for response.

- 25/38.2 Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records. No update available – hold over to next meeting.
- 25/38.3 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. No update available – hold over to next meeting.
- 25/38.4 Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project. No update available – hold over to next meeting.
- 25/38.5 Clerk to find cost of paint required for the telephone box. British Coatings Federation have agreed to supply the required paint free of charge. Clerk to arrange collection of the paint.
- 25/38.6 Clerk to contact Braintree District Council re loan of litter pick equipment for 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025. This has been arranged. The equipment will be delivered on 4<sup>th</sup> April and collected along with collected rubbish on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- 25/38.7 Cllr Graves to provide costs for commemorative bench and silhouette figures for VE day. The cost of the two items are £1025.00 excluding bench fixings. Cllr Graves proposed that both items were purchased and Cllr Neale seconded this. Clerk to purchase and arrange delivery.

### **25/39. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:**

- 25/39.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. Grant money has been received to progress the plan.
- 25/39.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received. Any emails received regarding Wethersfield have been circulated to councillors.
- 25/39.3 Tree planting project – verbal update to be given by Cllr Graves to determine actions to progress the project. Cllr Graves asked if Cllr Daines can take this action on. Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Daines to see if she is able to take this action on.
- 25/39.4 Parish Council Strategy document – to receive comments on the draft document and approve cost of production of document. Cllr Edwards-Holmes did not take part in discussions regarding costs for the strategy document due to a declared conflict of interest. The parish council agreed that Louis Finch drafting the leaflet and cover letter as per quote received and the printing cost of £44. It was also asked if A4 posters could be printed to advertise the document.
- 25/39.5 Playfield update / progress on funding / quotes. Cllr Winter confirmed that there has been no progress since the last parish council meeting as a meeting with Cllr Bourlet is still to be held.
- 25/39.6 Telephone Box for Defib – discuss repainting, maintenance and determine actions. Volunteers will be sought to paint the telephone box. Cllr Neale to enquire about replacement windowpanes for the telephone box.

### **25/40. Upcoming events**

- 25/40.1 Coffee Morning 8<sup>th</sup> February 2025 – feedback. The Coffee morning was not will attended by residents.
- 25/40.2 Annual litter pick – 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – loan of equipment has been arranged with Braintree District Council along with the collection of the collected rubbish bags. Event has been advertised in the parish newsletter. Advertising via posters and Facebook will also be carried out.
- 25/24.3 VE Day celebrations – update on event planning from Cllr Graves, proposal to purchase silhouette figure and / or a commemorative bench and approve a budget to cover tea, coffee and cakes and hire of tables and chairs from the village hall committee.
- The family event will be held on 11th May 2025 on the Toppesfield Playing Field, time will possibly be from 12.30pm – this will be confirmed. There will be field games, wheelbarrow races and side shows along with local wine and beer available for purchase. Families are encouraged to bring their own picnics. It is hoped that there will be military vehicles in attendance. Period dress will also be encouraged. Wet weather plans and toilet arrangements are also being looked into with the school / village hall. Cost of porta-loos will also be sought. The parish council unanimously agreed a budget of £300 for tea, coffee and cake refreshments and towards to cost of porta-loos. Clerk to liaise with the councils insurance company regarding the event.

### **25/41. Correspondence Received:**

- 25/41.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 25/41.2 Stehan Tabacu – Free Community Fitness Classes - Introducing a community fitness initiative. Due to its success, funding for the entire year of 2025 has been secured. Would the parish council be open to discussing this initiative in more detail? It was agreed to hold this request until more information is known.

25/41.3 Plans for new Hedingham medical centre a step closer. Braintree District Council has completed the process to transfer a plot of land located in Sible Hedingham to OneMedical Property. With planning permission and necessary approvals already secured; OneMedical Property is set to proceed with the development of a modern, purpose-built facility that will replace the three GP surgery sites currently run by the Hedingham Medical Centre. While OneMedical Property will own and manage the new building, Primary Care health services will continue to be provided by Hedingham Medical Centre.

More details can be found at:

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/news/article/755/plans-for-new-hedingham-medical-centre-a-step-closer>

25/41.4 Braintree District Council has commissioned a feasibility study to explore what a Digital Demand Responsive Transport (D-DRT) service could look like in your area. The feasibility study report would form the basis for any potential future bids or funding opportunities to establish such a service. A Digital DRT service is a form of shared public transport. It offers flexible, on-demand travel, allowing passengers to book journeys through an app or phone line and be picked up and dropped off at one of many virtual stops within an operational boundary. The survey will provide valuable input from residents. The online survey will be available for three weeks, from Wednesday 26 February to Wednesday 19 March 2025. Please see posters and the parish website for details on how to complete the survey.

#### **25/42. Financial Accounts:**

25/42.1 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 Smith. Payments are detailed in Appendix A.

25/42.2 Updating of Asset Register 2025 – discuss and approve updated asset register. This was discussed and it was agreed to seek external comment/advice regarding the register. Clerk to progress.

#### **25/43 Highways:**

25/43.1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(2). Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice of Gainsford End Road. The following link <https://one.network/?tm=142144926> will give details of the closure of Gainsford End Road, due to commence on 10th March 2025 for 1 day. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce whilst Essex County Council undertakes carriageway patching.

Cllr Edwards-Holmes to look at cost of road signs to be placed at Church Lane to say 'unsuitable for heavy vehicles' following an incident where a large lorry got stuck along the lane yesterday.

#### **25/44. Planning:**

#### **25/45. Communications:**

#### **25/46. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda**

It was agreed to place Christmas Event on the next agenda.

#### **25/47. Date of the next meeting:**

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

#### **25/48. Close**

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm

Signed:

Dated:

## Action Summary:

- Cllr Bourlet to review funding options for digitalising historic records.
- 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.
- Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.
- Clerk to arrange collection of paint for the telephone box.
- Cllr Neale to enquire about costs for replacement windowpanes for the telephone box.
- Clerk to purchase commemorative bench and silhouette figures for VE day and arrange delivery to the village hall.
- Cllr Graves to ask Cllr Daines to take on the tree planting project.

## Appendix A

Accounts - 6th March 2025				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 4th March 2025		36,600.14	
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£34,211.94</u>	
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 4th March 2025				
21.02.25	Groundwork UK R/C Neighbourhood Plan Grant		£2,410.00	
			<u>£2,410.00</u>	
Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 4th March 2025				
05.02.25	Vodafone contract		£13.80	
03.03.25	EDF Energy - The Pavilion electricity supply		£8.00	
			<u>£21.80</u>	
Direct Debits To be taken this month				
07.03.25	Vodafone contract		£13.80	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
05.02.25	Cllr Frances Winter - reimbursement for refreshemnts for Coffee Morning on 8th Feb 2025	By Bacs	£20.80	£0.00
05.03.25	Paul Clark Printing - Newsletter March / April 2025	By Bacs	£250.00	£0.00
28.02.25	HMRC - Tax on February salary	By Bacs	£731.54	£0.00
28.02.25	K Berry - February salary	By Bacs	£35.20	£0.00
			<u>£1,037.54</u>	
			£35,548.80	