



Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on Thursday 6th November 2025 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

25/175. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet - chaired the meeting
Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes
Councillor Chris Neale
Councillor Frances Winter
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Jane Daines

Also, in attendance:

District Cllr Richard van Dulken
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Jeremy Graves
County Councillor Peter Schwier

25/175.1 To accept apologies from members of the council

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

25/176. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

No declaration of members interests were made at this meeting.

25/177. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Cllr Richard van Dulken reported:

- An amount of money is still ear marked from the Councillors Community Grant fund for the parish councils tree project if it is still needed.
- Local Plan – sites are still being looked at by Braintree District Council (BDC).
- Wethersfield Asylum Centre – resident numbers are currently 1005. It is planned to reduce this to 800.
- During November all residents will receive a letter from BDC as to whether their property is classified as a standard or non- standard collection. This can be appealed if residents disagree how they have been categorized.
- Pot holes – the ones along Great Yeldham Road have been filled.
- Local Government Reorganisation – elections for a Mayor will take place in May 2026. There will be 2 councillors for every division and they will have more responsibilities.

25/178. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd October 2025

Cllr Smith proposed the minutes for the meeting held on 2nd October 2025 were agreed and Cllr Winter seconded this. The minutes were signed as a true record of the meetings.

25/179. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

Cllr Neale is yet to speak to a resident re the placement of wheelie bins on the highway.

25/180. Actions from previous meeting:

25/180.1 Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project. To be held over to next meeting.

25/180.2 Cllr Neale to follow up on quotes to carry out the work on the RoSPA action list. On going.

25/180.3 Cllr Neale to draft the councils Biodiversity Policy. Draft received, to be formatted and approved at the next meeting.

25/180.4 Clerk to arrange purchase of Poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday. Wreath purchased and collected.

25/180.5 Clerk to contact Unity Trust Bank with a view of switching accounts. See agenda point 184.3.

25/181. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

25/181.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. A open day will be held on 29th November 2025 – 10am – 2pm for residents to discuss the draft neighbourhood plan. Cllr Daines will be in attendance for the first part of the day.

25/181.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received – updates received have been circulated and Cllr van Dulken gave an update during the open session.

25/181.3 Playfield update on progress – this will be held over to next year and reviewed in to be in line with the priorities from the strategy document responses.

25/181.4 Action from the internal audit report – adopt a Biodiversity Policy - policy to be considered for approval.

25/181.5 Staffing committee to be determined. It was unanimously agreed that Cllrs Bourlet, Neale and Graves will made up the staffing committee.

25/182. Upcoming events

25/182.1 Remembrance service – 9th November 2025 – Update on installing the silhouette figures and Councillor required to lay the poppy wreath. Access to the barn is being sought and Cllr Neale will try to erect the figures before Sunday. Cllr Bourlet will lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

25/182.1 Christmas Event – update on progress of actions from previous meeting. Cllr Edwards- Holmes will take on the action to source the Christmas gifts. Cllrs Graves and Neale will MC the event. Volunteers for the day have been arranged along with Cllrs help. The date the tree is being erected is to be confirmed.

25/183. Correspondence Received:

25/183.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.

25/183.2 Braintree District Council – Potential Open Space Improvements Update – updates to the plan need to be submitted by 30th January 2026.

25/183.3 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted to Braintree District Council by the Parish Council. Views on the Plan are being sought (under Regulation 16 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012). Consultation is open until 5pm on Tuesday 2nd December 2025. The plan and supporting documents can be viewed and comment on at:

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/policyconsultation>

25/183.4 Braintree District Council are conducting a review of polling places in accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983. As part of this review, Feedback from key stakeholders to ensure that polling arrangements remain convenient and accessible for all electors is being sought. Further details about the review can be found on our website at

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/voting-elections/braintree-district-council-official-elections/6>

Whilst there are only five changes being proposed, the consultation is on polling places within the whole of the district, and therefore it is possible, as part of the consultation, to comment on any of the polling places used within the district. Comments to be submitted at elections@braintree.gov.uk by Friday 21 November.

25/183.5 Braintree District Council Waste Service Review – information received regarding the upcoming changes and where to point residents with questions or to find out more about the changes.

25/183.6 Complaint received regarding overhanging hedges/trees along pathways. It was agreed that the clerk will write to resident asking for the hedges to be cut back from the pathways.

25/183.7 Countryside Voices – Autumn/Winter 2025 edition received.

25/184. Financial Accounts:

25/184.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and Cllr Bourlet proposed they were accepted. Payments as detailed in Appendix A were agreed and signed by Cllrs Bourlet and Neale.

25/184.2 Updating of Asset Register 2025 - on going.

25/184.3 Feedback on discussions with Unity Trust Bank. Information was relayed before switching over can progress the mandate information needs to be up to date. Clerk to progress.

25/184.4 Proposal to adopt an Internet Banking Policy and an Internal Financial Control Policy & Procedure. Draft policies circulated prior to the meeting. Both policies were proposed for adoption by Cllr Neale and seconded by Cllr Edwards-Holmes. The policies were signed and adopted.

25/184.5 Budget for 2026 / 2027 – projects for consideration for budget. It was suggested that flashing speed signs are installed – approximately cost of this would be £4000.

25/184.6 Proposal to purchase thank you gifts for those who have done a lot of the doctors car service. This was discussed and Cllr Bourlet proposed a budget of £30 per person, this was seconded by Cllr Smith. Cllr Edwards-Holmes to progress.

25/185 Highways:

25/185.1 Road speeds and 20's plenty signs. Cllr Edwards-Holmes suggested getting the school involved to design '20 is plenty' signs to put up around the village. This was discussed and it was agreed to make this into a design competition. Cllr Edwards-Holmes will speak to the school regarding this.

25/185.2 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(1). Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Four Ash Hill, Ridgewell Road, Baythorne End, Baythorne Park, Birdbrook. Please see the following link <https://one.network/?tm=GB145778005> to find details of the intended closure due to commence on 24th November 2025 for 3 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council undertakes carriageway patching.

25/185.3 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(1). Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of High Street Green, Sible Hedingham. Please see the following link <https://one.network/?tm=GB145565204> to find details of the intended closure due to commence on 17th November 2025 for 5 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while UK Power Networks undertakes disconnection / reconnection.

25/186. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
25/02341/TPOCON	Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area- 2 hornbeam crown lift and reduce crowns by up to 2 meters	Dordell Court Church Lane Toppesfield CO9 4DR	Comments to Braintree District Council by 18th November 2025
25/01698/FUL	Proposed change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian & erection of stables.	Land North East Of Fairy Farm Toppesfield Road Wethersfield CM7 4EP	Braintree District Council Decision Application Granted
25/01843/FUL	Retention of existing single-storey detached holiday lodge	Toppesfield Hall Great Yeldham Road Toppesfield CO9 4LS	Braintree District Council Decision Application Granted
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	Braintree District Council Decision Application Granted with S106

No objections were raised regarding application number 25/02341/TPOCON

25/187. Communications:

25/187.1 Newsletter for January / February 2026 – articles to be submitted by 29th December 2025.

Cllr Bourlet will write an article for the newsletter re the Strategy document.

25/188. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

Items for the next agenda to include strategy document and parish council's budget.

25/189. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday 4th December 2025 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

25/190. Close

Cllr Bourlet closed the meeting at 9.00pm

Signed:

Dated:

- Cllr Neale to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.
- Cllr Neale to follow up on quotes to carry out the work on the RoSPA action list.
- Clerk to format and circulate draft the councils Biodiversity Policy.
- Clerk will write to resident asking for the hedges to be cut back from the pathways.

Appendix A

Accounts - 6 November 2025		£		
Community Account				
Balance as at 5th November 2025		£42,639.84		
All previous authorised payments issued balance should be		£42,637.52		
Payments made since last meeting		£0.00		
		£0.00		
		Balance £42,637.52		
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 4th November 2025				
Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 4th November 2025				
03.11.25	EDF - Pavilion electric	£8.00		
05.11.25	Vodafone contract	£14.68		
		£0.00		
		£22.68		
Direct Debits	to be taken this month	£0.00		
		Unrecoverable VAT		
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Payment Method		
06.10.25	Paula Edwards-Holmes - reimbursement for Dr Car phone top up	By Bacs	£10.00	£0.00
07.10.25	K Berry - reimbursement for Stamps and printer paper	By Bacs	£18.50	£0.00
14.10.25	Roadware Ltd - 2 Salt bins - reimburse K Berry	By Bacs	£319.08	£0.00
17.10.25	Toppesfield Village Hall - quarterly bill for office and meeting hire	By Bacs	£307.50	£0.00
05.11.25	Eden Print - November / December Newsletter	By Bacs	£289.00	£0.00
01.11.25	K Berry - October salary	By Bacs	£784.71	£0.00
01.11.25	HMRC - Tax on October salary	By Bacs	£6.60	£0.00
			£1,735.39	
			£40,904.45	