



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7th November 2024 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

24/157. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet -Chair
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Jane Daines
Councillor Jeremy Graves
Councillor Chris Neale

Also, in attendance:

No members of the public were present
County Councillor Peter Schwier
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

157.1 To accept apologies from members of the council.

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes and Councillor Frances Winter as they were out of the parish due to work or holidays.
Apologies were also received from District Councillor Richard van Dulken.

24/158. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

No declaration of interests were made at this meeting.

24/159. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

County Councillor Peter Schwier reported that:

- The latest edition of Essex Highways has been circulated.
- Essex County Council are encouraging people to enjoy the county parks around the county.
- The street light replacement scheme is nearing completion, there will be a 75% cost saving due to the new LED lights which have a 20-year life span. The saving will be £39 million over 25 years.
- Essex County Council are prepared for winter and have checked salt stocks and vehicles.
- Cllr Schwier has funds available from his Locality Grant fund – initial enquires are to be emailed to him and he will see if the project fits the criteria.
- The property flood resilience grant for up to £8000 is still open. More details can be found on the Essex County Council website.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken sent in a report as follows:

- Thanks to the Chairman for the two applications for Councillors' Community Grants, for trees, and towards the Christmas event, which I am considering as I write this. You may be interested to know that small occasional grants for community activities can be applied for by organisations within 20 miles from Stansted Airport - at the Stansted Airport website, search for "Community Funds". The one I refer to is called the Stansted Airport Passenger Community Fund and is funded from unwanted foreign currency collected from passengers and staff.
- With reference to waste collections, the new collection calendars are available on the BDC website. Of greater note are forthcoming changes to the whole system, in accordance with new government guidelines, designed to increase the % of waste which can be recycled. Over coming months details will emerge, and there will be a public consultation.

- You may have read that work on the Braintree Community Diagnostic Centre - at the Braintree Hospital - has begun, to provide X-rays, CT and MRI scans, blood tests and more. This when up and running will mean fewer trips to Broomfield or Colchester General.
- And I am equally pleased to advise that there has been movement on the Hedingham Medical Centre...construction work could begin this winter, with planned completion as I understand it to be in Spring 2026.
- You will have received details of the latest POSI (Potential Open Space Improvements) Plan, for which amendments need to be sent by 31st January.
- An expression of interest has been sent by Essex Districts, Cities and Boroughs (plus Southend, Thurrock and Essex County Council) to the government for a devolution deal for Greater Essex, which would allow local councils to make important decisions closer to where residents live and work, on transport, investments, skills training and houses & infrastructure. The government is keen on the model of Mayors, and for instance 3 or 4 larger District Councils making up Greater Essex.

24/160. To approve and sign the minutes of the Toppesfield Parish Council meeting held on 3rd October 2024.

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

24/161. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

The grant applications for the Councillor Community Grant were considered and the Parish Council were award £250 which will be used for the tree planting project.

24/162. Actions from previous meeting:

24/162.1 Cllr Bourlet to follow up with Alan Collard regarding funding for digitalising historic records and to determine actions. To be held over to the next meeting.

24/162.2 Cllrs Bourlet, Winter to arrange and meet with a third representatives regarding possibilities for the playing field. To be held over to the next meeting.

24/162.3 Cllr Bourlet to research funding for the playing field project and determine actions. To be held over to the next meeting.

24/162.4 Cllr Bourlet to report back to the playing field group with response from the Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch. To be held over to the next meeting.

24/162.5 Cllr Graves and Cllr Neale to measure the car park in Park Lane and map area required for EV charging point and seek advice on how to sell the land to minimise the sale costs. The plot has been mapped out, it is 12 x 12 meters with the stakes at 6 meters to halve the plot. 7.5 meters are required to install EV charge points.

24/163. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

24/163.1 Neighbourhood Plan update including funding required, councillor or clerk to complete funding Application and position of current draft plan. Report from Alan Collard was received in which it summarised events and the current position of the document. However the parish council need to apply for funding to complete the project. It was agreed that the clerk will work with Alan Collard and David Oxnam to apply for the necessary funding from Locality who handles NP funding on behalf of the government.

24/163.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre verbal update to be received. Minutes of the last WASC meeting were circulated to Councillors and are available on the Parish Council website. No further information was given.

24/163.3 2 Hour Short Course training – key takeaway notes from the training issued to Councillors. These were discussed in part and Councillors to review actions recommended.

24/163.4 Cllr Graves – update to be given on Gainsford End sign. The location of the sign is being looked into and Cllr Graves to contact Braintree District Council to enquire who provides the village gates if a new one is required.

24/163.5 Tree planting project – verbal update on funding application to be given by Cllr Graves and to determine actions to progress the project. Cllr Richard van Dulken has offered a grant of £250 towards the project and Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier to see if additional funding can be gained.

- 24/163.6 Christmas Event – verbal updates to be given on planning progress and to determine further actions. The event was discussed, and it was agreed volunteers would need to be found to help out on the day of the event. Cllr Graves to arrange delivery of the tree for the 6th December 2024 when it will be erected with help from volunteers. The tree will be decorated on the morning of the 7th December 2024. Cllr Bourlet to order further decorations with a red, white and blue theme. Cllr Bourlet to produce a schedule of events for publication. Other details for the event were also confirmed.
- 24/163.7 Parish Council Strategy document – comments to be received from Councillors regarding the draft document. To be held over to the next meeting.
- 24/163.8 Representative for the Toppesfield Charities – a representative need to be appointed to this role as a vacancy has arisen as a result of Alan Collard’s departure from the role. Cllr Jeremy Graves has agreed to be the second parish council nominee to join Dusty Millar and the other Church representatives as trustees.
- 24/163.9 Coffee Morning January 2025 – date confirmed as 25 January 2024 from 10am – 12pm.
- 24/163.10 Proposal to adopted updated Code of Conduct. Cllr Neale proposed the adoption of the updated document and this was seconded by Cllr Bourlet. The Code of Conduct was signed by the Chair.
- 24/163.11 Biodiversity – there needs to be a consideration of biodiversity when the council carries out its functions – this was noted by members.
- 24/163.12 Consideration of signing up to the National Association of Local Councils Civility & Respect Pledge. This was discussed and it was agreed to sign up to this. Clerk to progress.

24/164. Correspondence Received:

- 24/164.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 24/164.2 Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan – Reg 16 Public Consultation. A neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Braintree District Council in September 2024 by Earls Colne Parish Council. Views are being sought on the Plan (under Regulation 16 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012). The consultation is open until 5pm on Friday 15th November 2024.
- 24/164.3 Braintree District Council (BDC) Potential Open Space Improvements (POSI) plan (formerly known as the Open Space Action Plan). The 2024 document needs to be reviewed and notify BDC of any:
- Existing items to be removed
 - Projects that have already been delivered and can be removed
 - Changes or errors in the existing information
 - New items you wish to be included within the 2025 version
- The closing date for revisions is 31st January 2025.

- 24/164.4 Finchingfield and Wethersfield Joint Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 14 Pre-Plan Submission and Public Consultation. Comments are invited from the public and any interest parties during the consultation period which runs from 7th October until 22nd November. Online copies of the full Neighbourhood Plan document, appendices, a summary, and public feedback forms can be found at <https://www.fw-np.org/> Cllr Neale to review and inform the Parish Council if there are any areas that impact the parish.
- 24/164.5 UK Power Networks – overgrowth of hedges and trees near power cables and transformers. Pack of work to be carried out will be prepared and advise the Parish Council of access requirements and possibly power outages.
- 24/164.6 Braintree District Council - On Monday 4th November 2024 they will be launching a 6-week public consultation in relation to our new Design Code project. The Design Code will be a planning policy document used when determining planning applications and will set out clear expectations of good quality design principles for new development for the district. The quickest and easiest way to make comments is via the short online survey available at <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/designcode>.
- 24/164.7 Essex County Council – offer of Community Energy & Net Zero consultation received. The Parish Council would need to lead the project and there would be zero cost to the parish council. Cllr Bourlet will liaise with Alan Collard regarding this project to see what it entails and how much time is needed to be invested in it.

24/165. Financial Accounts:

- 24/165.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was presented and Cllr Bourlet proposed they were accepted, and this was seconded by Cllr Daines. Payments are detailed in Appendix A.
- 24/165.2 Consideration of projects for 2025/2026 budget. Project ideas were VE event, Tree planting and additional play equipment. Costs need to be determined.
- 24/165.3 Appointment of Internal Auditor – determine actions to engage an internal auditor. It was requested that clarification from EALC be sought to see if a councillor can undertake the role and if not what the cost would be.
- 24/165.4 NALC pay agreement for 2024/2025 received – proposal to implement the increase as stated in the NALC advice notes. It was resolved to implement this as soon as possible.

24/166 Highways:

- 24/166.1 Park Lane Car Park – discussions were held about the area and a number of points were raised which need further investigation with the parishioner who is interested in purchasing part of the land.
- 24/166.2 Footpaths – update on mapping of local footpaths including costs. Details of maps were passed onto the parishioner who was looking into this.
- 24/166.3 Reported Kerb issues in Church Lane and flooding outside The Chapel in The Street – verbal update on position. These reports have been investigated by Essex County Council and have reported back that they do not meet their requirements for immediate action or their minimum requirements to be recorded as a defect. However, they will monitor the issues as part of their routine inspections. Cllr Neale will email Cllr Schwier with regards to the previously reported large pothole on Great Yeldham Road and Gainsford End Road in order to try and progress the repair of these.
- 24/166.4 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(2). Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice of Gainsford End, Toppesfield. Please see the following link <https://one.network/?tm=140809007> to find details of the closure of Gainsford End, due to commence on 8th November 2024 for 1 day. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce whilst Essex County Council undertakes carriageway patching works.

24/167. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
24/02179/LBC	Replacement of all existing single glazed windows with new double glazed windows.	Scotneys Farm House Scotneys Lane Great Yeldham CO9 4HG	Comments to Braintree District Council by 11 th November 2024
24/02146/PLD	Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development - Single storey side extension	Bradfields Cottage Harrow Hill Toppesfield CO9 4LX	For Information Only
24/02052/HH	Installation of an air-source heat pump	19 Stambourne Road Toppesfield CO9 4DG	Braintree District Council Decision Pending consideration

Application number 24/02179/LBC was discussed, and no objections were raised.

24/168. Communications:

No items were raised or discussed under this item.

24/169. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

No items were raised or discussed under this item.

24/170. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 5th December 2024 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

24/171. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.55pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- **Cllr Bourlet to follow up with Alan Collard regarding funding for digitalising historic records.**
- **Cllrs Bourlet, 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 to report back to the playing field group with response from the Cricket Club representative regarding boundaries for the cricket pitch.**
- **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 ne be required.**
- **Cllr Graves to contact Cllr Peter Schwier regarding further funding for the tree project.**
- **Christmas event actions detailed in 24/163.6.**
- **Clerk to sign up to the National Association of Local Councils Civility & Respect Pledge on behalf of the parish council.**
- **Clerk to seek clarification of the internal auditor position and costs.**

Appendix A

Accounts - 7th November 2024				
			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 6th November 2024		39,841.76	
	less Uncashed Cheque		£25.00	
	All previous payments issued balance should be		<u>£39,816.76</u>	
	Income Received Included in the balance figure of 6th November 2024		£0.00	
			<u>£0.00</u>	
	Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 6th November 2024			
01.11.24	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£8.00	
			<u>£8.00</u>	
	Direct Debits Included in the balance figure of 6th November 2024			
06.11.24	Vodaphone Contract		£13.80	
			<u>£13.80</u>	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
28.10.24	Toppesfield Village Hall Commitntee - quarterly invoice & meeting charges	By Bacs	£307.50	£0.00
07.11.24	Paul Clark Printing - November/December newsletter	By Bacs	£250.00	£0.00
01.11.24	HMRC - Tax on October salary	By Bacs	£30.60	£0.00
01.11.24	K Berry - October salary	By Bacs	£712.35	£0.00
			<u>£1,300.45</u>	
			£38,516.31	