



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 6th April 2023 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

23/59. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Alan Collard
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Kitty Bourlet
Councillor Trisha Roberts

Also, in attendance:

6 members of the public
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Chris Neale

23/60. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

Cllr Roberts declared an interest in the planning application, agenda item, 23/69 as she had already submitted an objection to Braintree District Council.

Cllr Collard declared an interest in agenda item 23/67.2 as his wife is a school governor and Cllr Smith also declared an interest in agenda item 23/67.2 as she works for the school.

23/61. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Residents from Gainsford End attended the meeting to express their concerns regarding the planning application as described in agenda item 23/69. The main concerns were regarding incorrect information provided, flooding issues, the property would overlook the playing field, the land is currently agricultural land and the access to the property would need significant work to allow fire engine access and it will change the view and layout of the centre of the hamlet.

A resident who would like to help plan a coronation celebration has provisionally booked the village hall for the 7th of May, a street party could be held and use the hall if the weather is wet. It was questioned as to how much funds would be available for the celebrations. It was suggested that the Parish Council have a designated Facebook page to post on rather than posts getting missed in the village page. Research has been carried out into the price of commemorative mugs for the children of the parish.

A resident reported that there had been a lot of work on the car park, fencing off the back piece which has meant the car park is working as it should be and there are no longer abandoned vehicles in it. Also, quotes had been obtained to resurface the car park and mark out bays. It was suggested that if the back part of the car park were to be sold the monies raised should be used to resurface the front of the car park and mark the parking bays out and if it doesn't cover the cost to carry out this work then it should not be sold, and the land kept for future projects.

23/62. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd March 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

23/63. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

There were no matters arising.

23/64. Actions from previous meeting:

23/64.1 Cllr Neale to update on condition of basketball hoop – no update available.

23/64.2 Cllr Neale to arrange the informal strategy working group meeting – no update available.

23/64.3 Cllr Neale to confirm a date for a training session to Raise Awareness of 1st Aid. This has been confirmed as the 20th May 2023 and those who had expressed an interest have been notified of the date, spaces are still available.

23/64.4 Clerk to arrange for a waste collection lorry to attend the parish at the end of June. Cost has been confirmed for the collection lorry to attend. Clerk to book a date for the end of June if possible.

23/64.5 Clerk to invite the village groups to the Annual Parish Meeting. Invitations have been sent out.

23/64.6 Cllr Neale to follow up on the offer of play equipment – no update available.

23/65. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

23/65.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. Cllr Collard confirmed that narratives from village organisations are being obtained to include in the plan. Paul Munson is still involved and two people who were previously involved are willing to help out with the plans progress.

23/65.2 Update on proposed village Charity. Cllr Collard reported he is meeting with Jan Stobart from the RCCE to see how to progress this project.

23/65.3 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre update. Cllr Roberts reported that following the announcement that Asylum Seekers may be housed at Wethersfield Airbase there was a meeting held in Wethersfield Village Hall and there has been lots of media coverage about the announcement. Braintree District Council have secured an injunction and there will be a hearing in the High Court. The Home Office are preparing the site but confirmed no one will be moving in onto the site until the court hearing. The Fields Association have also applied for a second injunction but no hearing date has been set yet. This is a fast-moving project and James Cleverley MP has been asked to intervene more. WASC are waiting for the results of the contamination survey.

23/65.4 Plan to reduce the amount of dog fouling around the parish. It was agreed a sign should be placed at the playing fields regarding dog fouling and dog being kept on a lead. Clerk to create wording for a sign and circulate to councillors for comment and then obtain costs for the sign.

23/65.5 RoSPA inspection planned for May 2023 – notification received to state inspection will be carried out in May unless advised by the parish council. It was agreed the inspections should be carried out.

23/65.6 Proposal to change the lock to the parish office door and request for a key to the village hall. It has been established the parish council are the landlords of the village hall and as so they should have a key to the village hall and the only people with a key to the office are the Chairman and the clerk of the council.

23/65.7 Annual Parish Meeting arrangements. Invitations sent, notices to be displayed.

23/65.8 Car Park - Proposal to sell rear part of the car park. The proposal was discussed and the parish council agreed to sell the back half of the car park as per the proposal in Appendix A.

23/65.9 Coronation Celebrations – the parish council agreed to purchase commemorative mugs for the children (under 16's) of the parish. Cllr Smith to liaise with the school to see if the hall/playfield could be hired, with access to the toilets. For people to come together for a picnic. People to provide own lunch and drinks. Some tables and chairs could be provided. Enquires will be made to see if music could be provided. A fancy dress competition to be held for best King and Queen for the under 5 years and 6yr – 11 years. Judging will take place at 3.30pm. Event to run from 12.30pm – 4pm. A budget of £750 from the events budget was agreed. Event to be advertised through posters, Facebook, the shop and the pub as well as the school and pre-school.

23/66. Correspondence Received:

23/66.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.

23/66.2 20's Plenty for Us – would Toppesfield Parish Council be interested in taking part in the Campaign more information can be found at: <https://www.20splenty.org/> The project was discussed and it was agreed That Toppesfield Parish Council:

- supports the 20's Plenty for Essex campaign,
- calls on Essex County Council to implement 20mph in Toppesfield and Gainsford End and

- will write to Essex County Council to request 20mph speed limits on streets throughout the county where people live, work, shop, play or learn, with 30mph as the exception on those roads, where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allows a higher limit.

23/66.3 Request from Toppesfield Cricket Club to place two or three IBC's to capture rainwater from the pavilion roof. These will be housed in by black lap fencing approx. four feet high. The project will be funded by the cricket club. The request was discussed and it was agreed the Cricket Club to place the IBC's as requested.

23/66.4 The Local Government Boundary Commission – A consultation on division boundaries for Essex County Council has begun. There is a 10-week public consultation period inviting proposals for new council divisions and division boundaries for Essex County Council. This consultation period ends on 5 June 2023. Please see the following link for more details, [Essex | LGBCE](#)

23/67. Financial Accounts:

23/67.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and approved. See Appendix B for details.

23/67.2 Request for financial assistance from St Margarets School for help towards installing a toilet in the school hall and upgrading lighting in order to reduce energy costs. The request was discussed and it was agreed to support the project with a grant from the parish council of £1500 as this would be of benefit to the parish.

23/68. Highways:

23/68.1 Road Traffic Regulation ACT 1984 – Section 14(1). Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Toppesfield Road, Great Yeldham. Please see <https://one.network/?tm=132344683> to find details of the intended closure of Toppesfield Road, due to commence on 11th April 2023 for 4 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Anglian Water undertakes installation.

23/69. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
23/00502/OUT	Outline Planning Permission for the construction of 1 No. dwelling with garage/carport with permission sought for Access, Appearance, Layout & scale with Landscaping reserved.	Part OS 6961 Rear Of Mission Hall Gainsford End Toppesfield Essex	Parish council to make comments to Braintree District Council by 8 April 2023

The application was discussed in detail and taking into account the comments raised by the public attending and those comments already on the Braintree Planning Website the parish council are not supporting the application. The response to Braintree District Council was:

The Parish Council has concerns regarding the application as follows:

- The flooding issues which already badly affect the road adjacent to location of the proposed building and the nearby properties and road.
- The proposed entrance to the site is in the middle of an 'S' bend which would create additional danger to a road which is already used by heavy lorries and on which the speed limit is 60 mph.
- The design and scale of the proposed building are out of keeping with neighbouring properties.
- There is also a degree of uncertainty about the accuracy of some of the details in the application itself.

As a result, the Parish Council does not support the application as it is presented.

23/70. Coronation Plans to mark the event, including the purchase of commemorative mugs for the children of the parish.

This was discussed under agenda item 23/65.9

23/71. Communications:

Nothing was discussed under this item.

23/72. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

The League of Friends of Halstead Hospital have their AGM on the 23 May 2023 – posters have been displayed to advertise this and there are leaflets in the shop to promote their work.

23/73. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 18th May 2023 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

23/74. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.35pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- **Cllr Neale to update on condition of basketball hoop.**
- **Cllr Neale to arrange the informal strategy working group meeting.**
- **Clerk to arrange for a waste collection lorry to attend the parish at the end of June.**
- **Cllr Neale to follow up on the offer of play equipment.**

Appendix A

Re. Parish Council meeting 6 April 2023

Item 23/65.8 Car Park - Proposal to sell rear part of the car park (AC)

Background

Councillors will recall that at the July 2022 meeting a counter proposal was made to Paula Finch in respect of her offer to purchase the rear of the car park in Park Lane.

The offer had been £5,000 and the council's counter proposal was 'no lower' than a non-negotiable £7,500.

As no response had been received from Ms Finch, in October I was tasked with discussing the matter with her to ascertain her response.

After several failed attempts at, firstly, making contact and, subsequently, arranging a mutually agreeable time, I eventually met her last week.

She explained that she was surprised at the response from the council, which she felt was terse and somewhat aggressive in tone. Consequently, she felt it pointless to respond.

She had taken advice on the market value of the land and her offer was in excess of that valuation.

She is still willing to pay £5,000 for the land, with each party paying their own fees.

Proposal

I propose that the council accept the offer of £5,000 and agree that each party covers their own fees associated with the sale and purchase, as appropriate.

My reasons for recommending this course of action are:

1. We have no use for the piece of land, following the reconfiguration of the car park;
2. Retaining ownership would leave the council with the responsibility for maintaining the land but having no benefit from it;
3. There is only one realistic buyer of this land, as the only other property with a boundary is owned by Eastlight (Greenfields).

The income from a sale could be productively used in respect of other needs of the parish, for example at the two playing fields. The monetising of this asset would be more beneficial for the village than maintaining ownership of an asset that provides no benefits.

Alan Collard
4 April 2023

Appendix B

Accounts -6th April 2023			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 5th April 2023		£42,052.34	
	Balance as at 31.03.23 (year end)		£42,062.34	
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£41,603.60</u>	
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 05.04.23				
08.03.23	EDF		£150.00	
21.03.23	Toppesfield Village Hall insurance payment		£246.99	
27.03.23	Toppesfield Community Shop insurance payment		£61.75	
			<u>£458.74</u>	
Direct Debits / Payments made since last meeting (already deducted from the balance figure on the 05.04.23)				
03.04.23	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00	
			<u>£10.00</u>	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
03.04.23	EALC - EALC & NALC Affiliation fee	By Bacs	£180.79	£0.00
31.03.23	Paul Munson - advice on and drafting information for the Neighbourhood Plan	By Bacs	£1,250.00	£0.00
01.03.23	K Berry - March salary	By Bacs	£502.92	£0.00
			<u>£1,933.71</u>	
			£40,118.63	