



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 1st February 2024 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

24/16. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Kitty Bourlet
Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes
Councillor Frances Winter
Councillor Jane Daines

Also, in attendance:

Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Alan Collard
Councillor Jeremy Graves
Councillor Amanda Smith
County Councillor Peter Schwier
District Councillor Richard van Dulken

24/17. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

There were no declarations of interest reported.

24/18. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

District councillor van Dulken sent in his report:

- Garden waste collections by subscription commence week of Monday 11th March according to the calendar, and those signed up will shortly receive permit stickers to affix to their green bin(s).
- There are new rules on the collection of grey bin residual waste...there will be no further collection of excess waste by the side of the bin, and a bin will not be emptied if it is overfilled and the top does not close properly. This is part of an attempt to reduce the amount of residual waste from residents, which goes to landfill. Braintree District residents dispose of more residual waste than those in almost every other authority in Essex.
- It is looking more positive for some action on the Heddingham Medical Centre, with the business plan being submitted to the ICG for approval in February, after which building can be commenced later this year.
- Wethersfield – no further update from 3 weeks ago - that there are approx. 530 residents, and internal security has been beefed up. The Department of Justice is coming back on the issue of building one or more prisons on the site, as apparently the more favourably located sites around the country are not coming through. The Home Office is seeking a Special Development Order (SDO) for RAF Wethersfield, which would give it 3 years of occupation as a migrant centre plus 6 months of decommissioning. Braintree DC has indicated its opposition to this.
- There is a scheme which may not be relevant to many residents in this area but there is an opportunity for grants of up to £8,000 per qualifying household towards Property Flood Resilience – against flood or other water issues. I can point residents toward where to get further information.
- Over 50% of eligible Braintree District households have signed up for the subscription garden waste service commencing in April – this is higher than anticipated for Year 1 and begins to make the service pay its own way, though we are still conscious that the initial interest was helped by the half-price offer,

which has now ended. Income of over £800,000 towards the cost of the service.

- There is a national grant system called HUG2 (Home Upgrade Grant) from which Braintree District has had a sizeable allocation towards providing energy efficient measures like insulation, and low carbon heating (heat pumps essentially) to lower income homeowners who are not on the gas grid, and have low EPC ratings. Contact BDC at phandh@braintree.gov.uk or search HUG2 on the Gov.UK website,
- I still have a few hundred £ left in my Community Grant allocation – I need to allocate it before end of February as it will not be carried over to the following year. Can be used towards play equipment as an idea if that is to be upgraded.

The councillor's community grant was discussed and Cllr Bourlet will apply for a grant for the purchase of dog poo bags to be handed out free of charge with the aim to reduce dog waste left around the parish.

24/19. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Edwards-Holmes and seconded by Cllr Daines that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th January 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

24/20. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only.

There were no matters arising.

24/21. Actions from previous meeting:

- 24/21.1 Clerk to contact EALC regarding clerk's proposed contract and review comments made on the job description. Response received from EALC and comments to be reviewed before contract is circulated along with polices mentioned in the contract for councillors review.
- 24/21.2 Cllr Bourlet to write an article for locations for tree planting for the March/April newsletter. Article to be written by 20 February 2024 and sent to the clerk.
- 24/21.3 Clerk to completed precept forms and return to BDC. Forms were completed and returned.
- 24/21.4 Clerk to progress purchase of Salt bin for Camoise Close. The salt bin has been purchased.
- 24/21.5 Clerk to call Highways to see if the two potholes along the Great Yeldham Road could be expedited. Contact with Highways and Cllr Schweir and the updated status is that they are 'raised for repair but no date set'. Clerk to monitor this.

24/22. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 24/22.1 Neighbourhood Plan update. The grant application has been accepted and the grant should be received within 10 days.
- 24/22.2 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre update – updates have been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and minutes from the WASC group are available on the parish council website.
- 24/22.3 Coffee morning on 24th February 2024 and feedback from the January coffee morning. The January coffee morning was a success with over 50 people in attendance – there was a lot of interest in the historic photos and newsletters.
It was agreed to move the planned February coffee morning to March to link this in with the annual litter pick and an Easter Egg Hunt for children. A budget of £50 was agreed for this event.
Clerk to design a poster for the event and advertise it in the newsletter.
- 24/22.4 Historical archives – interest has been shown as a result of January's coffee morning. Consideration on how to progress this. It was agreed for Cllr Graves to explore locations for storage for archives and contact others who showed interested in a historical archive at the coffee morning.
- 24/22.5 Annual litter-pick – date to be set for end of March or early April 2024. It was agreed this will take place on 23 March 2024 from 10am – 12pm, to run alongside the coffee morning. Clerk to arrange equipment from Braintree District Council.
- 24/22.6 Installation and filling of salt bin in to Camoise Close and moving of salt in Village Hall carpark. The Parish Council would like to thank the group of volunteers who have installed the salt bin in Camoise Close and filled it. Cllr Edwards-Holmes is arranging for the remaining salt to be moved into the storage container.

24/23. Correspondence Received:

- 24/23.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 24/23.2 Essex County Council Bus Network Consultation 2023 - A decision has been made on the outcome of

the recent local bus consultation carried out between 13 July – 5 October 2023. To view the decision

please see: <https://www.travessex.co.uk/about-bus-services/consultations-supported-services>
[24/23.3 Age Well East – request for funding in order to help them empower people to age well.](#)

24/24. Financial Accounts:

24/24.1 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 Edwards-Holmes. See Appendix A for details.

24/24.2 Bank mandate – updating of account signatories. It was agreed to add Cllrs Bourlet, Edwards-Holmes and Daines to the authorised signatories. Clerk contact Barclays to progress this.

24/25 Highways:

24/25.1 Potholes on the Great Yeldham Road – this was discussed under agenda point 24/21.5.

24/25.2 **Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 - Section 14(1)** - Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Braintree Bypass - A131, Braintree. Please see the link <https://one.network/?tm=135249011> to find details of the intended closure of Braintree Bypass - A131, due to commence on 8th May 2024 for 3 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Essex County Council under takes surface dressing.

24/26. Planning:

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
24/00012/HH	Proposed annexe / cartlodge outbuilding. Removal of modern stable, and low quality lean to extensions to historic outbuilding. Proposed new vehicular access and driveway.	Scotneys Farm House Scotneys Lane Great Yeldham CO9 4HG	Braintree District Council planning decision: Pending consideration

24/27. Communications:

Cllr Bourlet asked if there was a better way to disseminate information to reduce the amount of information emails sent to Councillors. For example, the clerk could prioritise them or indicate which ones Cllrs would be interested in. Cllrs are asked to consider the best way to received information and how often.

The website needs to be updated – Cllr Winter to let the clerk know updated information regarding the village hall.

Cllr Edwards-Holmes agreed to hold the Doctor Car service phone expect for when on holiday, more drivers are required to help and the system of recording information will be overhauled.

24/28. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

It was mentioned that the 'waste heap/bonfire area' on the common land in Church Lane has damaged trees following a recent burning of waste. It was noted that this area is normally managed well but more garden waste is being left. Cllr Edwards-Holmes research the rules relating to Common Land.

24/29. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 7th March 2024 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall. Cllrs Bourlet and Edwards-Holmes gave their apologies as they will not be able to attend.

24/30. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.35pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- Cllr Bourlet to apply to the Councillors Community Grant Fund for the purchase of dog poo bags with the aim to reduce dog waste left around the parish.
- Clerk review EALC's comments regarding proposed contract and job description.
- Clerk to draft polices as mentioned in the contract for Councillors review.
- Cllr Bourlet to write an article for locations for tree planting for the March/April newsletter.
- Clerk to design a poster for the litter pick / coffee morning on the 23 March 2024.
- Cllr Graves to explore locations for historical archives and contact others who were interested in this project.
- Clerk to arrange loan of litter pick equipment from Braintree District Council.
- Clerk to contact Barclays re a bank mandate change of signatories.
- Cllr Edwards-Holmes to research rules regarding Common Land.

Appendix A

Accounts -1st February 2024			£	
Community Account				
	Closing Balance as at 31st January 2024		£30,488.35	
All previous payments issued balance should be			£30,488.35	
Income Received		Included in the balance figure of 31.01.24		
			£0.00	
			£0.00	
Direct Debits				
01.02.24	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00	
			£0.00	
			£10.00	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
13.01.24	Toppesfield Villgae Hall Committee - quarterly rent & meetings Jan - Mar 2024	By Bacs	£307.50	£0.00
15.01.24	K Berry - Reimbursement for purchase of Salt bin for Camoise Close	By Bacs	£185.94	£0.00
19.01.24	K Berry - Reimbursement for refreshments purchased for coffee morning	By Bacs	£26.64	£0.00
01.02.24	The Green Man - Christmas Event refreshments	By Bacs	£400.00	£0.00
01.02.24	HMRC - Tax on January salary	By Bacs	£47.80	£0.00
01.02.24	K Berry - January salary	By Bacs	£695.15	£0.00
			£1,663.03	
			£28,815.32	