



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 12 January 2023 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

23/1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Chris Neale - Chair
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Trisha Roberts
Councillor Kitty Bourlet

Also, in attendance:

District Councillor Richard van Dulken
5 members of the public were present.
Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Alan Collard
County Councillor Peter Schwier

23/2. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

Cllr Neale expressed an interest in agenda item 23/9.3.

23/3. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

Members of the public attended with concerns regarding the closure of Finchingfield bridge and the impact this will have on both local businesses and those business in the surrounding areas. There are concerns that there will not be a bridge for 12 months whilst work is carried out. It was asked in the parish council could comment on a planning application for a temporary bridge once this has been made and could it be publicised via Facebook and the parish website to encourage others to respond as it will affect local business and local travel if a temporary bridge is not in place.

Members from Finchingfield and Wethersfield Parish councils were in attendance to discuss a Joint Neighbourhood plan to cover the Wethersfield Air base as it is in four parishes. It is hoped this plan will give local communities a say in what happens at the airbase. The airbase is in the parishes of Sible Hedingham, Wethersfield, Finchingfield and Toppesfield. Toppesfield Parish Council should only be needed to communicate/liase with as the main work will be carried out by other parishes. The Braintree District local plan appears to ignore the airbase therefore there is no policy support for a prison. If the prison project does not go ahead there is still 85% of the base left to be considered. It is hoped the joint plan could be completed within 2 years.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken reported:

- Braintree District Council (BDC) Christmas Tree Collection service is advertised on their website. Cllr Neale confirmed this was promoted on both the parish Facebook and website pages.
- There is a warm hub in the Reading Rooms in Great Yeldham, this is being held when the Post Office service is open in the reading rooms.
- The BDC budget is close to being set. The green waste collection is not a statutory responsibility of the council and discussions are being held as to whether this should be a chargeable service. Staffing costs have increased by 6%, as well as fuel rising. Savings are being looked at and one saving will be that BDC will no longer be issuing the paper versions of the waste collection calendars – this will be available online only. There will also be no increase in the Councillors allowance this year.

- Cllr Butland has sent a letter to the MoJ asking what the position is regarding the proposed Wethersfield Prison and about the concerns regarding contamination.
- Essex County Council Highway Rangers are no longer being subsidised by ECC so we now have to rely on Essex Highway Maintenance to address problems.
- Rural England Prosperity Fund – Braintree District Council have £580, 000 dedicated to funding various projects, one of which is open to parish councils and community groups for refurbishing heritage assets. Further details of the fund will follow in due course.
- Braintree Local Highways Panel – local councils can pay for traffic surveys at a cost of £350.00.

23/4. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st December 2022 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

23/5. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

There were no matters arising.

23/6. Actions from previous meeting:

23/6.1 Cllr Neale to progress repairs to the basketball hoop at Toppesfield playing field – no progress has been made – hold over to next meeting.

23/6.2 Cllr Neale to arrange the informal strategy working group meeting – this has not been progressed.

23/6.3 Cllr Collard to arrange the village groups meeting – no suitable date was available for the majority of groups was reached. To be looked at again at the end of January/ beginning of February.

23/7. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

23/7.1 Neighbourhood Plan update and 23/7.2 Joint Neighbourhood Plan to cover the airbase:
Cllr Collard has spoken with Jan Stobart from the RCCE and Paul Munson regarding Toppesfield's Neighbourhood plan and the joint Neighbourhood Plan and some concerns have been raised.
Cllr Neale to arrange a meeting with all parties involved to see how to progress the plans.

23/7.3 Update on proposed village Charity – no update was available.

23/7.4 Wethersfield Airfield proposed development update – Cllr Roberts reported that WASC have completed all targets that were originally set. SWAP have raised concerns that there is contaminated land on the airbase. Cllr Butland from Braintree District Council is asking for a full study of potential contaminations to be carried out.

Cllr Roberts will be attending the next meeting of BALC (Braintree Association of Local Councils), if there is anything to be put to the meeting can Cllrs advise Cllr Roberts.

23/7.5 Possible Airbase development – Cllr Roberts provided details of a proposal to establish a 'community-led' delivery vehicle to manage the future of Wethersfield air base with the support of the South East New Energy project as part of the joint Neighbourhood Plan. This was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

The next steps from the report read as:

- a) Resolve whether to authorise Three Green Fields CIC to agree to a community co-design and planning session with the local community and the four Parish Councils involved in developing the Airbase neighbourhood plan and ask UK Community Works to start planning this session.
- b) Resolve whether to authorise Three Green Fields CIC to engage with Montare and UK Community Works to begin the process of searching for funding for any future proposal for the site and for Montare to carry out (at its own cost) viability studies and assessments regarding any agreed future use of the site.

Toppesfield Parish Council agreed to these next steps in principle but with mild concerns as to the workload for a small council struggling to find Councillors.

23/7.6 Park Lane Car Park – item to be carried over to next meeting.

23/7.7 Feedback from Christmas Event and purchases needed for next Christmas. Clearer communication is needed between volunteers as some were unclear as to timings, roles and who was supposed to be doing different aspects of the evening. The pub was full of people singing carols as Brain Moody played them. The Green Man provided refreshments, but more help was needed to distribute these. Two new

sets of lights are required for the Christmas Tree along with outdoor lights for the Pump and more baubles for the tree. Cllr Neale to progress this.

Cllr Bourlet suggested a volunteers section is added to the newsletter to help with events. Cllr Bourlet to write the article.

23/7.8 Warm Hub – events to be arranged in conjunction with the Village Hall Committee

The last coffee morning the village hall put on was not well attended. Discussions on how to increase attendance was held, more advertising is needed for events.

Cllr Smith to speak to the Head of St Margaret's School if the school hall could be used as a warm space on specified days and encourage pupils to play board games with those that attend.

Cllr Neale to speak to The Green Man to see if they would be willing to open the pub as a warm space and provide soup and a roll.

23/8. Correspondence Received:

23/8.1 EALC Legal and County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.

23/8.2 Information Commissioners Office – Confirmation of direct debit being set up and annual discount.

23/8.3 Braintree District Council – Housing Briefing Dates for 2023 have been received.

23/8.4 Braintree District Council – Emergency Planning Information – Annual update of Emergency Plans and details, amendments to be submitted by 31st January 2023. Clerk to complete.

23/8.5 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/> It was agreed to carry this over to the next meeting to allow further reading into the project.

23/9. Financial Accounts:

23/9.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and approved. See Appendix A for details.

23/9.2 Budget 2023/2024 – draft budget for discussion, amendments, and approval.

The budget was discussed and agreed. The precept for 2023/2024 remains at £17493.

23/9.3 Request for funding from the Gardening club at St Margaret's School, Toppesfield.

The request was discussed and as there was a gardening club at the school previously Cllr Smith will look for the Hi-viz vests and litter pickers as they may not need to be purchased again. The Gardening Club will be directed to Toppesfield Community Shop as they also have provision for funding projects in the parish.

23/10. Highways:

23/10.1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14(2). Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice of Great Yeldham Road, Toppesfield. Please see the following link <https://one.network/?tm=131913297> to find details of the closure of Great Yeldham Road, due to commence on 23rd January 2023 for 4 days.

The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce whilst Essex County Council undertakes carriageway patching.

23/11. Planning:

No items were raised or discussed.

23/12. Communications:

No items were raised or discussed.

23/13. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

No items were raised or discussed.

23/14. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 2nd February 2023 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

23/15. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.45pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

- Cllr Neale to progress repairs to the basketball hoop at Toppesfield playing field
- Cllr Neale to arrange the informal strategy working group meeting
- Cllr Collard to arrange the village groups meeting – look at dates for end January/beginning of February.
- Cllr Neale to arrange a meeting with the RCCE, Paul Munson, David Oxman, Cllr Collard and Cllr Neale to respond to concerns raised regarding the joint Neighbourhood Plan.
- Cllr Neale to purchase 2 sets of lights for the Christmas Tree, outdoor lights for the Pump and baubles for the Christmas tree.
- Cllr Bourlet to write a volunteers section for the newsletter.
- Cllr Smith to speak to the Head of St Margaret’s School if the school hall could be used as a warm space and if pupils could play board games with those that attend.
- Cllr Neale to speak to The Green Man to see if they would be willing to open the pub as a warm space and provide soup and a roll.

Appendix A

Accounts -9th January 2023			£	
Community Account				
	Balance as at 9th January 2023		£44,882.78	
All previous payments issued balance should be			£44,887.78	
	Balance as at 31.12.22 was £5.00 higher due to receiving a discount on the ICO payment as the direct debit form has now been processed.			
Income Received	Included in the balance figure of 09.01.23		£0.00	
			£0.00	
			£0.00	
Direct Debits / Payments made since last meeting				
01.1.23	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00	
			£10.00	
				Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice		Chq No:		
01.12.23	Toppesfield Village Hall Committee - Oct 22 - Dec rent	By Bacs	£298.50	£0.00
08.01.23	The Green Man - Christmas event refreshemnts	By Bacs	£300.00	£0.00
01.01.2	K Berry - December wages	By Bacs	£502.92	£0.00
			£1,101.42	
			£43,781.36	