



Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7th September 2023 at Toppesfield Village Hall at 7.30pm

23/145. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

- Councillor Alan Collard
- Councillor Jeremy Graves
- Councillor Amanda Smith
- Councillor Frances Winter
- Councillor Paula Edwards-Holmes

Also, in attendance:

- District Councillor Richard van Dulken
- Eighteen members of the public
- Kaaren Berry – Clerk

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Kitty Bourlet
- County Councillor Peter Schwier

23/146. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items

There were no declarations of interest reported.

23/147. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

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The speed of tractors, JCB's and other farm vehicles through the village was raised and it was asked if the Parish Council could write to local landowners and farmers stating complaints have been received regarding dangerous driving, drivers being on their phones whilst driving and speeding through the village and surrounding roads. It was agreed that the Parish Council will write to local landowners and farmers, it will also be

copied to Essex police. The member of the public who raised the issue declined the opportunity to review the letter.

Two members of the pétanque group stated that the group is now happy with the new court as a couple of issues had been addressed by the contractor. The group are confident that the court will settle properly. The pétanque group thanked the Parish Council for its support and stated that they are looking into setting up an afternoon group to make more use of the amenity.

Concerns were raised regarding a possible Environmental Impact Assessment which was discussed at the Parish Council meeting in August.

There was some confusion as to whether this was part of a full planning application.

It was explained that there is no planning application under way nor planned at the moment.

The background is that Essex County Council had funded a pre-feasibility study to determine whether there was any scope for a possible low or zero carbon community energy project on land owned by the Estate Charity. In doing this all-potential options were examined and ECC was asking the appropriate bodies whether an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required in the event a planning application were to be made. The trustees of the Estate Charity have an obligation to manage the charity's assets in such a way as to maximise its ability to meet its objectives, which form part of its trust deed. As there was no cost involved for the Charity (nor the Parish) it was agreed to support the prefeasibility study to determine (i) whether it was practical and (ii) what the financial benefits could be.

The Parish Council will inform the public if it becomes aware that a planning application is being prepared so that a full consultation can take place with parishioners.

Councillor van Dulken reported:

- There is now a Foodbank in Sible Hedingham Baptist Church. This is open on a Tuesday from 2pm – 4pm. People need to be referred in order to be able to use the service.
- That he and District Cllr Iona Parker along with Councillors from Bulmer and Ridgewell are keen on getting a bus from Hedingham to Haverhill. There is a consultation on Essex County Council's website and is open for comments until the 5th October 2023.
- Wethersfield – some of Richard's colleagues attended a tour of the site and were impressed by the set up and they had the opportunity to talk to some of the residents. Braintree District Council still feel that it is the wrong place for the asylum centre. Permission was granted for a Judicial review hearing which will be held on 30th and 31st October 2023.
- Cllr van Dulken mentioned the Environmental Impact Assessment application to Great Yeldham Parish Council.
- The garden waste collection will be chargeable from next year but for residents who sign up before the 30th November 2023 there will be an early bird discount of 50%. *New arrangements will start March 2024 for the new.*
- The Councillors Community Grant is not available for Toppesfield Community Club as their shareholders receive interest payments.

23/148. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Graves and seconded by Cllr Winter that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd August 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

23/149. Matters Arising not on the agenda - for report only.

There were no matters arising.

23/150. Actions from previous meeting:

23/150.1 Cllr's Smith, Bourlet and Winter to draw up a plan for both Gainsford End and Toppesfield playing fields. This is in progress.

23/150.2 Cllr Collard to draw up a proposal for the replacement of a Cherry tree along The Causeway – see agenda point 23/153.2.

23/150.3 Clerk to contact BDC with information relating to the original sale of the Park Lane car park – see agenda point 23/154.1

23/151. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

23/151.1 Neighbourhood Plan update - A copy of the current draft was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Work still needed to be carried out on this includes some fact checking, photos, design and oversight by our advisor, Paul Munson, who is the ex-head of BDC's Planning Department and experienced in producing Neighbourhood Plans. It is hoped that a 'drop-in day' during late autumn to show the key aspects of the draft Plan to parishioners will be held. The draft will be amended to take into account relevant observations and comments and then will be submitted to Braintree District Council (BDC) for their approval. Thereafter a referendum will be held to accept or reject the plan. Advice from RCCE is being taken as to the possibility that BDC will require an updated housing needs assessment as the most recent survey took place pre-covid. Little progress on the plan was made during the 18-month period of restrictions.

There has been no communication from Wethersfield/Finchingfield about their joint plan.

23/151.2 Update on proposed village Charity - following advice from Jan Stobart at RCCE, the Charity Commission application to establish a Community Fund has been redrafted and will be ready to submit shortly.

23/151.3 Wethersfield Airfield and Asylum centre update – the latest information was forwarded to Councillors for their information and the minutes from the WASC meetings are available on the Parish Council website.

23/151.4 Christmas event – ideas for the event are required and Cllr Bourlet will take the lead on planning this. A budget of £750 which includes a Christmas tree was agreed.



23/151.5 Offer of working party to landscape the pétanque court area and consideration of budget for this. An offer from a working party to landscape around the court has been received so there will be no labour charge. A budget of £150 - £200 for a skip to remove the rubbish was proposed by Cllr Graves and Seconded by Cllr Smith. This was agreed by those present. The Pétanque group is not constituted therefore is unable to apply for external grants.

23/151.6 Damaged slide in Toppesfield Playing field – Clerk to seek cost of a replacement slide and it was agreed the damaged slide should be removed in the meantime.

23/151.7 Proposal to investigate setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Group – it was agreed that posters will be displayed, and a Facebook post made to see if there is any interest in this and therefore a need for a group to be set up.

23/152. Correspondence Received:

23/152.1 EALC Legal & County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.

23/152.2 Broxap – Outdoor fitness equipment brochure received.

23/152.3 Barclays – letter received requiring updated organisation details to help prevent financial crime and meet legal and regulatory requirements under section 27 and 28 money laundering, terrorist financing and transfer of funds (information Payer) Regulations 2017 – Cllr Collard and Clerk to complete and return.

23/153. Financial Accounts:

23/153.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received.

Cllr Collard reported that he attended a meeting with Steve Amerio and members of the pétanque group to talk through the questions raised at the last meeting. There was a member of the group who went to the playing field each day to check on progress and he was happy that the work was done correctly, but it was agreed that a further layer of the top level would be added and a slight modification of the retaining edge would be made to help those with mobility problems access the court. The pétanque group are happy with the outcome. This week there were 12 players and others have expressed an interest in joining. There are plans to landscape the area around the court. Cllr Graves proposed that all payments were approved and Cllr Smith seconded this. See Appendix A for details.

23/153.2 Costs of removal of a dead tree from along the Causeway and its replacement - Boyd Page has offered to remove the dead tree at no cost. Replacements, recommendations include rowan, crab apple, hawthorn, amalankia and ornamental pear. These were discussed and costs will be obtained by Cllrs Collard and Graves for the next parish council meeting.

23/154. Highways:

23/154.1 Park Lane Car Park – Braintree District Council have received information in order for them to identify the land in question and they will revert back to the parish council once they have considered the deed packet.

23/154.2 Potential project for the pump – outline planning permission needs to be completed through the planning portal and minimum cost could be £295.00. It was agreed that Cllr Collard and the clerk will progress and outline planning application.

23/15.3 Road traffic regulation act 1984 - section 14(1), Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Ashen Road, Ashen. Please see the following link <https://one.network/?tm=134486922> to find details of the intended closure of Ashen Road, due to commence on 14th September 2023 for 5 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Anglian Water undertakes hydrant installation.

23/154.4 Flooding issue from the Green Man barns to the village hall - an ad-hoc jetting service is scheduled and is aimed for them to be attended by the end of September.

23/154.5 Consideration of installing additional salt bins – this was discussed and agreed that the Clerk should progress and application for the installation of a salt bin in Camoise Close.



23/155. Planning: The below applications were noted by the parish council.

Application No:	Description	Address	Action
23/01859/TPOCON	Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Prune tree back by a 1m. Currently touching roof and cables	The Green Man Church Lane Toppesfield CO9 4DR	Comments to Braintree District Council
23/02022/COUPA	Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for associated operational development - Change of use to 2no. residential dwellings.	Meekings Farm Harrow Hill Toppesfield CO9 4LX	For information only - no requirement for comments.
23/02138/COUPA	Prior approval for the Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to a flexible use within Storage or Distribution (Class B8), Hotels (Class C1), Commercial/Business/Service (Class E), or until the end of July 2022, uses previously classified as Assembly and Leisure (Class D2).	Toppesfield Hall Great Yeldham Road Toppesfield CO9 4LS	For information only - no requirement for comments.
23/01633/LBC	Conversion and extension of holiday accommodation barn to create residential annexe.	Cust Hall Gainsford End Road Toppesfield CO9 4EB	Braintree District Council planning decision: Granted
23/01698/SCR	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 - Screening Request (Regulation 6) - Solar Farm	Land Adjacent To Toppesfield Hall Great Yeldham Road Toppesfield	Braintree District Council planning decision: Pending Consideration
23/01871/FUL	Change of use of land from agricultural to residential and the stationing of a mobile home.	Plot 1 Land Off Park Lane Toppesfield	Braintree District Council planning decision: Refused

23/156. Communications:

23/156.1 Article for volunteers has been placed in the parish newsletter. Cllr Edwards-Holmes volunteered to maintain the Facebook Page for the parish council.

23/157. Information exchange / Items for the next agenda

There was nothing discussed under this item.

23/158. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 5th October 2023 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

23/159. Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.40pm

Signed:



Dated: 5 October 2023

Action Summary:

- All Councillors to provide ideas for the Christmas event for the October parish council meeting.
- Clerk to obtain costs for a replacement for the damaged slide.
- Cllrs Collard and Graves to obtain costings for replacement tree along The Causeway.
- Cllr Collard and Clerk to progress an outline planning application for the potential Pump project.
- Clerk to progress an application for a salt bin to be installed at Camoise Close.

Appendix A

Accounts -7th September 2023

		£	
Community Account			
	Closing Balance as at 31st August 2023		£36,762.22
All previous payments issued balance should be			<u>£28,249.04</u>
Income Received Included in the balance figure of 31.08.23			
31.08.23	Essex County Council Verge Cutting payment		£2,117.18
			<u>£2,117.18</u>
Direct Debits / Payments made since last meeting			
01.09.23	EDF Energy - The Pavilaion electricity supply		£10.00
			<u>£10.00</u>
payments listed for payment at the last parish council meeting but not yet released (already deducted from the balance figure of £28249.04			
30.07.23	Steve Amerio Contracts Ltd - construction of petanque courts	By Bacs	£6,396.00
			<u>£6,396.00</u>
			Unrecoverable VAT
Payments to be approved:			
Date of invoice		Chq No:	
01.09.23	Toppesfield Village Hall - quarterly rent and meetings	By Bacs	£327.50 £0.00
17.07.23	K Berry - Reimbursement for office refurbishment	By Bacs	£641.17 £0.00
05.09.23	Paul Clark Printing - Sept/Oct Newsletter	By Bacs	£220.00 £0.00
01.09.23	K Berry - August salary	By Bacs	£502.92 £0.00
			<u>£1,691.59</u>
			£28,664.63