

Earls Colne Parish Council



Minutes of Parish Council Annual Meeting
Wednesday 21st May 2025
in the Village Hall, York Road, Earls Colne, COG 2RN

Present:

Nikki Spelling (NS)	ECPC Chair
Ray Ranns (RR)	ECPC Councillor
Jonathan Happs (JH)	ECPC Councillor
Shirley Newberry (SN)	ECPC Councillor
Tony Calton (TC)	ECPC Councillor
Dee Ellison (DE)	ECPC Parish Clerk
Chris Siddall (CS)	ECC Councillor
Gabrielle Spray (GS)	BDC Councillor

Absence:

George Courtauld	BDC Councillor
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Members of the Public: Mr G Crocker, Mr R Barton, Mr B Lynham, Mr J Bendall, Mr M Alexander, Mr R Curtis, Ms V Doubleday, Mrs A Crane, Mr B Cook

1. Welcome

2. Election of Chair 2025/26

Cllr N Spelling was nominated and proposed as Chair by Cllr Ranns,

Seconded by Cllr T Calton

Voted in acceptance by Cllr J Happs, Cllr S Newbery

Accepted by Cllr N Spelling, with documentation of declaration of acceptance of office signed at this point.

3. Annual declarations of Compliance were signed at this point by;

Cllr T Calton, Cllr R Ranns, Cllr J Happs, Cllr S Newbery

4. Briefing from Chair:

a. Welcome - (reflection of the past 12 months}

b. Resignations/ Absence

LBL resignation

Cllr J Jemmett

George Courtauld apologies for absence via email

5. Declarations of Interest

None

6. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: Parish Council Meeting 16th April 2025

Chair asked for approval from the Councillors, making specific reference to the two additional written comments by residents, for show of hands. Resident Ms V Doubleday raised an objection that the minutes did not reflect the correct interpretation, and produced a statement that the Councillors agreed could be included within these minutes.

7. Essex County Council Matters

CSiddall delivered his report. Resident Mrs Crane raised queries with him regards overgrowth on Station Road. It was identified as the residents hedge that was overgrown and they needed to cut it back. In the meantime ECPC and resident can report it to highways for them to resolve by notifying the resident, if

they fail to action Highways will cut it and charge them. Cllr Happs raised queries regarding the bridge and stream flooding between Earls Colne and Colne Engaine. Resident Mr Alexander raised query regarding the pothole by the Church. Cllr Siddall reiterated the pothole budget was being worked through in the order of priority of the size/location of reported issues.

8. **Braintree District Council Matters**

Cllr Spray delivered her report. Cllr Calton asked for clarity as to whether a Call for Site location can be submitted without the land owners permission. It was confirmed that it could, however actual planning requires the owners permission. Further discussions with Cllr Sray were raised regarding the new recycle bins and processes, who advised that the review is expected to be concluded by 2026. **Action: Clerk to organize an awareness event on recycling with Charlotte Payne from BDC.**

Cllr Spray updated the attendees that the junction changes at the top of Station rd are due to start in June 2025.

9. **Public Participation Session with respect to items on the Agenda:**

- Ms V Doubleday reiterated that she wished the emphasise; the request for planning application detailed that parking was reported as more than adequate. If changes made to the green were now approved it would impact applications in the future. She questioned: does the minutes of Feb 2022 mean the decision had already been made?
- Mr R Barton requested that the Parish Magazine be updated with correct details of Councillors and village events.
- Mr Croker asked for an update on the Co-option process?
 - Chair advised that guidance on a revised process had been given by Kim Mayo and the council was waiting for further instructions.
- Mr M Alexander addressed the council, and residents regarding the history of the ownership of his property, he emphasised that had offered to pay for the cost of the works to widen the parking area not buy the land and provided a summary of his 3 minute allocated time

10. **Finance**

- a. **Financial reports accepted by all**
- b. **Confirmation of appointment of the Responsible Financial Officer**
Proposed by Cllr T Calton, Seconded by Cllr J Happs
- c. **To review and agree Financial and Reputational Risk Assessment**
Note that this task is outstanding by Cllr J Jemmett. Action: Clerk and Cllr J Happs to complete the task
- d. Evidence from Scribe was produced to confirm that challenges raised regarding the banking and posting of raffle prize monies.
- e. Evidence from Scribe was produced that confirmed process and accuracy of reported and addressing unrepresented items at year end had been taken correctly.

11. **Governance**

- a. **Annual review of Policy Documents as detailed on the website, with priority to:-**
 - i. **Code of Conduct**
 - ii. **Standing Orders**
 - iii. **Financial Regulations Policy**

Chair recognised these are draft and should have been reviewed in March in readiness for a vote.

Chair Proposed: to accept in principle, on understanding that ECPC current versions are out of date in relation to NALC updated versions final versions are recorded as agreed in full at June meeting, when an admin session has been

Seconded by : Cllr S Newbery. Unanimous agreement.

- b. **Agreement of future meetings of the Council, including dates for annual meetings in 2026 and location.**

Chair shared that the meetings are being moved to a Thursday in the main hall, the schedule clearly shows person responsible for counter signing/scrutinising the financial reports. Any lack of understanding of these reports must be raised with the Clerk in advance.

Proposer: Cllr T Calton Seconder: Cllr J Happs. Unanimous agreement

12. Urgent items for approval:

- a. Additional S106 funds allocated facilitate those requiring hard standing access (buggies, wheelchairs/disability vehicles) to the sum of. Approval sought for the additional sum of £3100 plus VAT be given to allow hard standing at the ECRC playpark?

Proposed by Cllr J Happs, Seconded by Cllr S Newbery. Voted unanimously

- b. Approval for selection of supplier to support planning application for Village Hall windows and associated cost.

Proposed by Cllr T Calton, Seconded by Cllr J Happs

13. Matters for next meeting agenda (June 19th 7pm) – Advised by the Clerk

- Co-option process to take place at the July meeting- subject to update from Monitoring Officer.
- Internal Audit response (audit scheduled for 10th June 2025)
- AGAR – submission deadline 1st July 2025
- Exercise of Public Rights date(30 days between meeting date of AGAR approval:
 - i.e. a date between 19th June and 18th July.)
- Update on resolution tracker (progress on actions captured during public meetings)
- Proposal/Nominations for Vice Chair and Personnel Committee
 - referred to in the draft Standing Orders
- Proposal/Nominations for working groups
- Revised agenda for regular meetings to include:
 - statement regarding recording the meeting
 - times for the meeting and the point when public being asked to leave the meeting
 - for In Committee session (meeting is to last 3 hours, 7-9.30pm open to public.)

REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS MAY 2025

Local Plan: The Local Plan sub-Committee met on Thursday 15th May to discuss the Draft Spatial Strategy i.e. broadly where in the District we would prefer to see development taking place. This item did not cover specific sites, those discussions will start with a meeting on Thursday 22nd May and continue through to the end of July. There is a break in August, with meetings resuming from September – October.

Please do look out for meetings where sites specific to The Colnes villages will be examined. Currently, we have:

- Earls Colne (as a key service village) on 5th June
- Colne Engaine 12th June
- Pebmarsh 19th June
- White Colne 25th June

Whilst it is hoped to stick to this timetable, it is subject to change if necessary, so do check the BDC website to be sure. Agendas will be published five working days prior to each meeting.

This is very much a **draft allocation process**; the Reg 18 Public consultation will follow in November/December when anyone will be able to submit comments on what the Committee has decided. There will be a further public consultation in early 2026 before the draft Plan goes to the Planning Inspectorate. So, a long way to go yet!

Waste Service Review: There has been the biggest, and most detailed, consultation that District Councillors can remember on the proposed changes to how the District's waste is collected. A reminder that this is a change required by Government in order to increase recycling rates and standardise collections across the country. A final decision on exactly how the District will change the service, in terms of number of bins provided and frequency of collections will be decided at a meeting of the Cabinet on 27th May.

Norwich-Tilbury energy scheme: The decision to grant or refuse this National Grid scheme will be taken by the Planning Inspectorate as it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Braintree Council, through the planning team, continue to lobby National Grid to at least consider the off-shore option, for running cables undersea along the coast, rather than erecting multiple pylons across fields and farmland over three Counties. To date, National Grid are not receptive to looking at this option.

Councillor Grant Fund: A reminder that for the Council year 2025/2026 District Councillors each have £1,250.00 to donate towards local projects. Bids welcome!

With best regards

Cllr Gabrielle Spray

I wish to make a statement as a member of the public about the recording of minutes at parish council meetings.

I attended the January meeting and had to request that 5 points made by me at this meeting but were missed from the minutes be included. Councillors present at the meeting were asked if that had any objections to this addition and all confirmed that this was acceptable. In reality this could not be refused as it was a statement of fact.

January's minutes were therefore corrected.

I further attended the meeting in April and made 4 further points about a part of the village green being purchased for private use and asked a question relating to the Feb 2022 minutes. Only two of the points that I raised were included in the minutes. Two further pertinent points were not minuted, neither was my question. When I requested that these points (as below) were added to the minutes I was told that this was not possible retrospectively. I queried this as it had been possible in January and was asked to contact the council office by telephone. My preference is for correspondence to be in writing.

Today I request that minutes for the April 25 meeting are a true record of what was said and that the points that I raised in April are duly added to said minutes. These are that;

1. I respectfully request that all councillors read the planning application as made by the applicant when seeking permission to convert a garage to an annexe in which he clearly states that "there is more than adequate parking at the front and side of the principal building, six spaces in total"
2. I stated that allowing this application was setting a dangerous precedent for any future applications relating to the village green.
3. Finally I asked a question regarding the minutes of February 2022, as to whether a decision had already been made regarding this applicants proposed purchase of part of the village green, will this be answered?

Thank you,
Valerie Doubleday

Max Alexander Notes Parish meeting 21st May 2025

Mr Alexander gave history of house being in family ownership since 1989. He pointed out he owns the driveway.

Annex planning was granted circa 9-10 years ago and at the time parking wasn't a problem. Indeed, this isn't and hasn't been the main concern. Turning and moving of cars is.

Access and tight turning and any parking for our immediate neighbours is very challenging sometimes impossible. Vehicles do sometimes reverse into the road.

He mentioned that the drive had been, in the 1970-early 80s wider prior to the council added more soil to make narrower, belief was to stop travellers parking. Neighbours and John Bendall confirmed.

He noted Mrs Doubleday about parking on the green. That is Mr Alexander on occasion to enable neighbours to access in and out.

He noted this isn't about Mr Alexander profiteering or setting a precedence as a similar request was granted at Tilwicks opposite. Notwithstanding the approach has already in 2022 been approved.

As a compromise to prove the point he said that he would not seek ownership of the additional driveway but still pay for and grant unlimited access for council, mentioning that the green land could, and should, be used better rather than dog relief and then walking down his drive.

Mr Alexander also noted vehicles still occasionally need to reverse on to the mail road. Mrs Doubleday said this is not true however Mr alexander pointed out he had cameras on front of house to evidence. (indeed, has given evidence to the council previously)

Mr Alexander concluded by saying happy to compromise, he is not trying to cause upset he is just trying to facilitate modern living and neighbours' and others safety while supporting the council in perhaps making it the green more user friendly and he will pay for it.

ECPC Parish Clerk

From: Scribe Support <info@scribeaccounts.com>
Sent: 12 May 2025 15:50
To: Ray Ranns
Cc: ECPC Parish Clerk
Subject: [ID:24718] AGAR 2024/2025

Dee/Ray,

Following our telephone conversation of today I can confirm:-

- You identified that there were some unrepresented items in 24/25 (for Legal Fees) that needed to be removed and added to 25/26.
- There was an additional unrepresented item from 23/24 that needed to be removed from the accounts.
- VAT code corrections were made as transactions were already submitted to HMRC. A VAT journal was also added for VAT and corresponding entries in 25/26 have had the VAT removed.
- VAT Summary in 24/25 now matches with the Q4 submission to HMRC and the Q1 claim has been reduced accordingly.
- The AGAR for 24/25 has been recalculated and balanced
- Box 7 from 23/24 matches with Box 1 for 24/25
- Box 8 has been used for the Reconcile All banks, and A=B checks out ok with the correct unrepresented items now being accounted for.

As discussed I would recommend using the box breakdown in 23/24 and 24/25 to complete your explanation of variance. Do remember to use words and numbers to account for the variance.

[▶ How can I view a breakdown of my annual return boxes?](#)

[▶ Explanation of Variances](#)

Kind regards,

Tracy Fisher

Customer Success at Scribe

On Fri, 25 Apr 2025 at 11:21, Scribe Support wrote:

Hi Ray,

I regret this feature has not yet been added to the asset register.

Kind regards,

Evidence of Raffle prize payment in relation to formal question raised by Lorraine B Leys.

Post Office Ltd
Your Receipt

09/12/2024 10:01:29 TP:00 BP:04 SU:07
11 Elm Way
12 Ellen Way
Great Malvern
Worcestershire
WR11 2UG
CRIT TUG

Co-Op and Smile Cash Dep
Post Office Everyday Banking
Card Number: 4988241111115525
Application ID: A0000000201010
PAN Seq ID: 00
KTzm ID: 34MKK1012343

Service: CASH DEPOSIT
Amount: £322.00

CASH DEPOSIT APPROVED

CARDHOLDER RECEIPT
Please retain for your records
This is not a VAT receipt

V 215
520 / 1

Raffle
Receipt

Year 2024/25 Receipt #215

Bank*
Co-op - Community Direct Plus

Invoice Ref

Date*
09/12/2024

Invoice/Order No

Description*
Projects

Customer*
SCPL

Related Records

Receipt Details

Cost Centre*	Cost Code*	VAT Type*	S.137	Net*	VAT*	Total*
Village Environment	Special Events 50	E - Exempt		322.00	0.00	322.00
				322.00	0.00	322.00

Additional Details

☒ Cashed

Notes
Income from sales of raffle tickets at the Christmas event 07/12/24

Attached Files
Upload any file and attach it to this record. First image will be used as the main image (if relevant to your record)

EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Ms D Ellison (Parish Clerk)

Council Office,

Village Hall,

York Road,

Earls Colne, Colchester,

Essex, CO6 2RN

Tel: 01787 224370

E-mail: clerk@earlscolne-pc.gov.uk



Dear Sarah

This letter is signed by ALL Councillors attending Annual Parish Council Meeting on 21st May 2025 confirming their approval for additional spend from S106 funds allocated to Earls Colne Playpark sited at Earls Colne Rec Club, for the purpose of installing suitable hard standing at entrance gate and disabled picnic bench area:

N Spelling: Chair..... *US Spelling*

T Calton: Councillor..... *T Calton*

R Ranns: Councillor..... *RR*

J Jemmett: Councillor..... *Resigned 20/5/25*

J Happs: Councillor..... *J Happs*

S Newbery Councillor..... *S. Newbery*

This letter will form part of the minutes recorded at the meeting.

Regards

D Ellison
D Ellison

Parish Clerk/RFO