

Clerk: Kate Rixson
 Address: Great Easton Village Hall,
 Great Easton, Dunmow, CM6 2HF
 Telephone: 01371 404220
 Email:
parish.clerk@greateastonparishcouncil.co.uk
 Web: www.greateastonparishcouncil.co.uk

MINUTES

Minutes of the Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 26 September 2024 in Great Easton Village Hall, Great Easton.

Present:

Councillors

Cllr T Martens (Chairman), Cllr J England, Cllr D Hahn, Cllr J Heath, Cllr C Hurst, Cllr P Neale and Cllr J Stevens.

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Seven members of the public attended, including District Councillor Haynes.

	The Chairman opened the meeting at 7 pm
09.24.01	Apologies for absence Cllr Benterman was unable to attend due to work commitments. The reason for absence was accepted by resolution.
09.24.02	Declarations of interest Cllr Heath declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 13 on the agenda.
09.24.03	Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting The minutes of the parish council meeting on 25 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chairman.
09.24.04	<p>Public participation session and item 10 on the agenda</p> <p>A report on progress with fundraising and planning for new play equipment on the Great Easton playground was provided by the chair of the GECA playground committee. Although no new items would be installed before Spring 2025, enough money had been raised to buy one or more smaller pieces of equipment. The playground committee of Great Easton Community Association would be meeting their chosen supplier HAGS on 3 October and a member of the council was invited to attend. The committee would like the parish council to consider a proposal to fund one item of equipment as part of its budget considerations in November. Additional details would be provided to the clerk, to supplement the letter having been sent to the council earlier in September.</p> <p>It was agreed to deal with Item 10 on the agenda at this point in the meeting: Consultation process to plan the future management of Burns Playing Field in Duton Hill</p> <p>Members of the public contributed to a discussion of the best method of consultation to involve all interested parties. The chair suggested that the consultation would need to extend over a period of months in order to collect all relevant views. It would include meeting the Duton Hill Community Association and asking residents of both parishes to make their views known to the parish council. The chair advised that work on basic repairs to the building which is now named the Rivershed (former changing rooms) would be carried out from 7 October and weeds and brush near the building and gate would be cleared on 13 November. The building would be cleaned professionally before 13 November. Action: Clerk and council</p> <p>It was agreed to deal with Item 8 on the agenda at this point in the meeting: Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting Report</p> <p>The Chairman reported on a successful meeting on 5 September which filled the function room at The Swan. A second meeting would be held on 17 October at 7pm at The Swan, to create the core working group for the project and discuss how to obtain the views of local people. Nicky Joshua of the Rural Community Council of Essex would again attend. Publicity would be needed for the meeting. Action: Clerk and council</p>

	<p>A question concerning the demolition of the buildings on the Laundry Lane football field was raised and the chairman explained that this was at the request of the football club, as the buildings were no longer usable. The club would be building new structures at their own expense.</p>
09.24.05	<p>District and County Councillors' report</p> <p>District Councillor Foley had sent a detailed report by email which had been circulated. Councillor Haynes advised it was possible to comment on the technical and legal aspects of the draft Local Plan until 14 October. This was an extension of time as more evidence on transport issues had been added after publication. Any comments made at this stage would be sent direct to the examiner and would not result in any amendment of the Plan. Cllr Haynes felt that the protections included in the Plan for rural areas such as the Great Easton and Tilty parishes were not as strong as they could be. Cllr Haynes offered to assist with the Neighbourhood Plan process and this offer was gratefully accepted.</p>
09.24.06	<p>Chair's report and receiving reports on progress for items not listed separately on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Green – the chair reported that the green had been repeatedly damaged along the roadside edge. It had been repaired and reseeded with grass, only to be damaged again almost immediately. Item 11 of the agenda was therefore considered at this point in the meeting. Cllr Neale proposed that wooden posts should be placed along the roadside edge of the green as a deterrent to drivers using the green to pass parked vehicles or oncoming traffic. After discussion of this and other possible measures, it was agreed that quotations should be obtained for suitable posts and that legal advice was needed on the council's potential liability for damage or injury caused by collision with the posts. Action: Clerk • Parking next to Tilty church –the chair reported that after his meeting with the archdeacon he had not heard anything for some time, so had sent a reminder. This had been acknowledged but he had not yet received any reply which addressed the matter. He would pursue this. Action: Chairman
09.24.07	<p>Clerk's report on items not listed separately on the agenda, and correspondence</p> <p>A written report (annexed to the hard copy of these minutes) had been made available and was taken as read.</p>
09.24.08	<p>Neighbourhood Plan – see 09.24.04 above.</p>
09.24.09	<p>To consider requesting a 20mph speed limit in Duton Hill and Great Easton</p> <p>It was pointed out that even with the current 30mph speed limit there were many speeding drivers in both villages. This endangered pedestrians especially children walking to and from the school bus stops. The council voted unanimously to request a 20 mph speed limit via the Essex County Council Local Highways Panel. It was noted that the support of the Eastons' county councillor would be needed to take this step, and that Essex County Council as the Highways Authority would take the decision. Action: Clerk</p>
09.24.10	<p>Burns Playing Field – see 09.24.04 above.</p>
09.24.11	<p>Proposal to put up wooden posts on the village green, Great Easton – see 09.24.06 above.</p>
09.24.12	<p>Proposal to join The Friends of Historic Essex</p> <p>This voluntary group supports the work of the Essex Records Office, which assists the council by archiving its public records such as minutes and accounts. Membership was unanimously approved at a cost of £12. Action: Clerk</p>
09.24.13	<p>Proposal to make a grant to the Five Parishes Baby and Toddler Group</p> <p>Having declared a non-pecuniary interest, Cllr Heath took no part in the decision-making but answered factual questions from councillors. It was noted that the grant made in February 2024 had been used to meet hall hire fees for about six months, and £80 of the grant was still available. A proposal to provide a grant of a further £325, intended to cover the cost of about three months' hall hire, was put to the vote and passed, with four in favour, one against and one abstention. Action: Clerk</p>
09.24.14	<p>To adopt a Document Retention and Disposal Policy in the form of the SLCC model document.</p> <p>The parish council unanimously approved the draft which is annexed to the hard copy of these minutes. The policy would be added to the website. Action: Clerk</p>

09.24.15	<p>To approve a procedure and application form for requesting grants and donations from the parish council</p> <p>A draft form had been circulated. The clerk clarified that the parish council had no power to make grants to individuals but that groups need not be incorporated so long as they had a bank account in the name of the group with control exercised by more than one person. The procedure set out on the application form and the application form itself was unanimously approved and should be made available. Action: Clerk</p>
09.24.16	<p>Parish Council Financial Reports and Decisions</p> <p>A summary and note of the bank balance at 18 September 2024 had been circulated to councillors and was tabled. Bank statements to 31 August 2024 were made available to councillors and had been reconciled with the cashbooks.</p> <p>16.1 Income and payments for the year to date (1 April 2024 to 19 September 2024)</p> <p>Total income to 19 September 2024: £28,385.70 (precept, VAT refund, contribution to printer toner, rent for Laundry Lane)</p> <p>Total outgoings to 19 September 2024: total £21,657.69 including VAT</p> <p>16.2 Balances: The TSB current account held £33,831.23 at 19 September 2024.</p> <p>16.3 Comparison between actual and budgeted income and spending.</p> <p>An analysis had been circulated and was tabled. Income and spending were close to and slightly under the budgeted figures.</p> <p>16.4 Payments and receipts to note and approve</p> <p>There were no new payments requiring approval except those appearing elsewhere on the agenda. A list of payments from 25 July to 21 September 2024 was tabled and noted. It was noted that the second half of the precept was due to be paid on 26 September 2024.</p>
09.24.17	<p>Village Hall Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and payments for the year to date (1 April 2024 to 19 September 2024) Total income to 19 Sept 2024: £3,519.60 – hall hire plus investment income. Total outgoings to 19 September 2024: £3,701.87 including VAT • Balances: The TSB current account held £7,683.41 and the Unity Trust Bank account held £23,901.07 as at 19 September 2024, a total of £31,588.48. • It was reported that regular bookings were being maintained, with groups returning after the summer break. One-off bookings were healthy. <p>It was noted that the trust committee meeting could not be held on 17 October as the Neighbourhood Plan steering group meeting would be taking place on that date. A new date would be agreed, preferably for late October, at the Three Horseshoes in Duton Hill, with the AGM to be held in January 2025. Action: Clerk</p> <p>Grants for renovations</p> <p>The clerk was thanked for her work in obtaining grants of £9,000 in total to cover renovation and decorating costs for the hall.</p>
09.24.18	<p>Planning applications, decisions and progress on planning matters</p> <p>A note of the outcome of previous applications had been circulated and was tabled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the Restore Easton Park campaign and draft Local Plan commitment to this It was agreed that the council should support this. Action: Clerk • Consideration of commenting on the draft Local Plan (Regulation 19 stage). Cllr Stevens reported on the useful Local Plan briefing by Uttlesford District Council for parish councils, with reference particularly to the likely future issues with congested roads including the A120, and the Design Code aspects of the Plan. After discussion it was agreed that the council would not comment on the draft, having provided many comments at the Regulation 18 stage and noting the changes since then. It was noted that the village of Great Easton had not been allocated any new housing under the Plan. • No new planning applications had been made since the publication of the agenda.

09.24.19	<p>. To receive representatives' reports (for items not shown separately on the agenda or discussed above)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open spaces including playing fields/play areas and trees The chair confirmed that tree surgeons' quotes would be obtained for the large amount of work recommended by the arboriculturist. Action: Clerk, Chair A motorbike had been ridden on several occasions on Burns Playing Field, without consent. The grass had been damaged. The PCSO had been asked to speak to the riders but had said she was unable to pay home visits without the name of the persons involved. The clerk was obtaining further details from the complainants. • Local Plan briefing by Uttlesford District Council for parish and town councils. See 09.24.18 above. • Footpaths, road safety and highways –. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cllr Stevens reported that the footbridge on footpath Tilty 3/Tilty 19 was new but not being used because the footpath beyond it was too overgrown to walk along. He will provide details of the location and the chairman would raise this with the landowner. Action: Chair ○ It was noted also that signs had fallen into the ditch on footpath Great Easton 43 near Welseys Barns. The location would be clarified and the clerk would report this. Action: Clerk ○ Speed limit signs on the B184 had been damaged, presumably by a collision, and were no longer legible. This should be reported. Action: Clerk ○ Water continued to drain across the pavement on the Endway near Merrifield, which was leading to the growth of algae which was making the pavement dangerously slippery. It was noted that this was a longstanding problem which property-owners needed to solve. Action: Chair ○ Councillors had observed the misuse of electric bikes and scooters and the clerk was asked to include comments on this in the next Five Parishes magazine article from the council. Action: Clerk ○ Railings at the Duton Hill bridge had again been damaged, presumably by a collision with a vehicle. The clerk should report this. Action: Clerk ○ A depth gauge was still needed at the Duton Hill junction near the river as it flooded frequently. The clerk should raise this with Highways. Action: Clerk • River interests – nothing new to report save the need for a depth gauge for flooding incidents at Duton Hill. • Airport – nothing new to report. • Community activities and events — Great Easton Community Association: A quiz had been arranged for October. • Dunmow United Football Club — the club had raised funds to build a new pavilion and had requested permission to build this. The council as trustee of the Recreation Ground charity which owned the Laundry Lane land had agreed this at the last meeting. The clerk advised that a written agreement between the council and club was desirable. This could make it clear who owned the building, who was responsible for insurance, maintenance and costs generally, and how decisions about it should be made. It was agreed that the clerk should make the club aware that the land was owned by the Recreation Ground charity. Action: Clerk • IT, website, social media and communications – The clerk advised that new regulations would be coming into force in mid-October on the accessibility of websites to people with disabilities. An audit was needed and the IT/website budget was sufficient to cover the cost. It was agreed that the council's website designer should be asked to carry this out. The fee would be £150. Action: Clerk
09.24.20	<p>The date and time of the next meeting was confirmed as 7pm on Thursday 28 November 2024 at GREAT EASTON VILLAGE HALL.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.10 pm.</p>