

Stanford Rivers PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 14th November 2024

Time: 5.30pm

Too Hill Village Hall, Too Hill Road, Too Hill, Essex

PRESENT:

Councillors (5) Cllr Glover (Chairman), Cllr Jackson, Cllr Saridja, Cllr Hollington, Cllr Tallon

Also in Attendance (1) - Adriana Jones – Clerk

Members of the Public (0)

Members of the Press (0)

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None

P14.1251 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Mrs Jackman and Cllr Adams. EFDC Cllr Amos had also offered his apologies.

P14.1252 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

P14.1253 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

P14.1254 MINUTES

Councillors **APPROVED** the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 12th September 2024.

P14.1255 MEMBERS REPORTS

- Chairman's Report – The Chairman confirmed that he had been liaising with the Clerk and a local resident regarding the sewage blockage in Too Hill, and he was confident the matter had now been resolved. Cllr Tallon stated that this had caused a local issue in terms of the road being fully blocked off when it was in fact passable by one lane, with people wishing to attend the golf club having to back up 500 yards and turn. The Chairman advised that he had represented the Parish Council at both the North Weald Bassett Act of Remembrance on Sunday 10th November and St Andrews Church, and had also attended the luncheon.
- Vice Chairman's Report – No report
- District and County Councillor reports – No reports
- Parish Councillor reports – Cllr Tallon advised he had received a number of reports of large lorries using School Road at very unsociable hours, such as 5am, possibly from Stewarts Farm. The Clerk confirmed she would look into if there were any operational restrictions for Stewarts Farm, as well as speaking with enforcement. Cllr Tallon stated that the location where there were previously lots of tyres now had a lot of hard standing there, as well as a caravan. The Clerk confirmed she would raise this with enforcement.

Cllr Adams had submitted a written report regarding the possibility of planters in front of the new Gateway Signs, stating that after liaising with the local residents of Bridge Farm they had expressed concern that the space between the signs and the wall is used by those living at / visiting the farm and that this should not be obstructed. The report also stated that there is no visibility under the sign so a planter would not hinder any visibility if exiting from Bridge Farm, providing that the planting is kept between the posts. Councillors noted that it had been agreed to have artificial plants in the planters, and that as such they will be fixed and will not grow, and that this should alleviate any concerns the resident has.

P14.1256 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Members **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the Clerk as follows:

- Foul waste issue Too Hill – broken mains – Clerk and Chair received correspondence from local resident, and the Clerk had liaised with Thames Water. It is understood the issue had now been

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resolved. Reminder that the PC has very little weight in cases where a statutory undertaker is involved.

- To note the interim internal audit for 2024/2025 will be taking place on 4th December 2024.
- PFCC Community Safety Briefing 3rd December – details emailed out to Councillors - Roger Hirst, the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner along with BJ Harrington, Chief Constable, Essex Police, Rick Hylton, Chief Fire Officer will be among those speaking at the Community Safety Event. It was asked if they would allow Zoom attendance, however it was not thought so.
- EFDC Local Councils Liaison Committee Thursday 21st November 2024 7pm.
- Correspondence from owner of Surrywood, 12 London Road, regarding refusal of planning application.
- Thursday 8th May 2025 80th Anniversary of VE Day – keep on agenda
- Sunday Times request for information about Speederbot for article – was eventually published.
- Clerk will be attending an EFDC Corporate Communications Team Peer Review on 4th December 2024 to provide feedback on EFDCs communications.
- EFDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting of 29th October 2024 addressed appropriate scrutiny of Transport for London and the concerns affecting Epping Forest District Council. A copy of the report for this meeting can be found at <https://eppingforest.moderngov.co.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=120956> , and to view the webcast of the meeting, go to https://eppingforestdc.public-tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/922208/start_time/190000
- To note an update on the sale of the leased land on Jubilee Green, in that Essex County Council is moving forward with sale to the neighbour who holds a garden license, with the land already being in garden use.
- Fly Tip reported FS-Case-655494531 layby on A113.
- Formal confirmation of the diversion of footpath 47 near the bund at the Flood Storage area now received.
- The salt / grit has been delivered to the village hall. Council agreed they would like to purchase three grit bins to be placed at strategic locations in the Parish into which the salt could be placed – one at the village hall, one in Toot Hill and one in Stanford Rivers.

P14.1257 FIRST AID COURSE

Councillors noted that the First Aid course being run by the Parish Council would be taking place on 18th January 2024 9am to 12pm, with 12 attendees. Invites have been sent to those who expressed an interest on a first come first serve basis. So far 10 had confirmed their attendance, with the Clerk waiting for another 1 to confirm, and one stating they could not make it. It was agreed that Cllr Tallon would offer this space to a representative of the Green Man. It was also agreed that another session should be considered at the budget / precept meeting for 2025/2026.

P14.1258 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Cllr Adams had submitted a written report, stating there was only one item on the prior months police reports which was a theft of a vehicle from London Road.

P14.1259 CHRISTMAS EVENTS IN THE PARISH

Councillors discussed the dates of the two Christmas Tree events in the Parish – one in Toot Hill and one for Stanford Rivers. Cllr Tallon advised that the Toot Hill lighting would be on 1st December, however they were currently having issues in terms of the getting the tree delivered as the cost had increased exponentially. It was therefore agreed to hold the Jubilee Green event on Sunday 8th December. Cllr Jackson confirmed he would liaise with Phillipa to establish if she was available for carols.

P14.1260 WORKING GROUPS

1. Solar Panels at Village Hall Working Group

- a) On 23rd October, works were undertaken to erect a small scaffold and take a piece of the roof covering off the hall in order to establish the structure underneath, and ascertain its suitability in terms of being able to safely hold the weight of the solar panels. However things didn't quite go as expected, as after safely removing one of the asbestos roof sheets it became apparent that there is another layer of asbestos lining sheets beneath the top sheets. The contractor had a number of concerns regarding removing this additional layer of asbestos lining, none more so than he was unsure if he would be able to make the roof watertight afterwards. As such, they did not go any further and replaced the asbestos roof sheet and ceased investigate works. The Clerk had discussed this with the contractor, and he believes the most appropriate solution at this point in time is to go from the inside of the hall, removing a number of ceiling tiles. A date is currently awaited for these works.

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- b) Councillors recalled that the Clerk submitted a Permitted Development planning application to EFDC regarding the Solar Panels, however she was asked to provide further information including better drawings which included dimensions. The Council's solar panel contact kindly provided these to the Clerk, however when she looked at this she could see that the proposed design would not fulfil the requirements of Permitted Development rights. As such, she spoke with the contractor regarding the options, including either amending the design or submitting a full planning application. The contractor suggested that to amend the design would have a noticeable impact on the amount of energy that would be created. As such, the Clerk has now submitted a full planning application to EFDC for the works.

2. CCTV at Village Hall

The CCTV working group met via zoom on 13th November, and after full discussion of the options would like to recommend that Council agree to have two cameras, both with the ability to see at night, with remote access. They felt however that an intruder alarm would be more problematic, so suggested this did not go ahead. The cost for these works would be as follows:

- 1 x 4 channel DVR with 2 TB hard drive to give a minimum of 14 days' record time
- 2 x 5-megapixel cameras in agreed locations
- Cabling and power supplies
- Connected to phones, iPads, laptops that are available on the day of installation. Telephone support will be provided for other devices not available
- Colour View Cameras

Installation price £962.00 + VAT

It was noted that an internet connection with an upload speed of at least 1 megabyte would be needed to be able to remotely view the cameras. There are no obligatory ongoing fees, and the system has 1-year full warranty, after that time there is optional all-inclusive service cover available for £100.00 + VAT per annum. At night the cameras will go into black and white, and the infrared LEDs will illuminate up to 12 meters, the cameras will see more than the human eye but the pictures will not be as good as during the day.

The Council **AGREED** to move forward with this quote and the recommendation of the working group.

P14.1261 OPEN SPACES AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- a) **Work on land the PC does not own** – Councillors noted that a legal update had been provided from NALC on this matter, as follows:

Q. Can a parish or town council carry out works on land it does not own?

This question has come up a few times recently. Residents may feel they need more maintenance on land with no known owner and approach the council to see if they can help. In the first instance, we advise parish and town councils to contact and check with their insurers. Ultimately, their view is relevant, and a council would not wish to do anything that invalidates its insurance policy. If council insurers do not object to such works, there are other considerations for councils. Suppose a council carries out works once (e.g. grass cutting, tree pruning, fence repairs). In that case, that may set an expectation that the council will continue to carry out such works and that it is responsible for maintaining the land and incurring the associated costs. Parish and town councils may contact us for further advice.

The Clerk reminded the Council that ECC had not provided it with permission to cut land that it owns (such as the areas in front of the gateways signs, or verges, etc), and that the Clerk had checked with its insurers who stated that there could be possible vicarious insurance issues if they carried out work. Cllr Jackson suggested that perhaps the Parish Council could pay an extra cost to cover doing this work, and it was **AGREED** the Clerk would establish if this was possible.

- b) **Cutting of small island between layby and A113** - At the request of Cllr Jackson, the Clerk contacted ECC asking them to cut back the overgrown island to ensure good visibility is maintained into the layby near Traceys Farm, the response from highways being 'We have determined that the issue it does not meet our minimum requirements to be recorded as a defect at this time or the issue may have already been resolved - During our routine safety inspections the area will be monitored to check if it has deteriorated. A future inspection may result in a new defect being raised'. Cllr Jackson advised that this had in fact recently been cut, albeit he was not sure who had cut it. The Clerk advised this would have been ECC who cut it. Cllr Jackson advised that it is important this area is kept clear to prevent fly tipping at this location. The Clerk advised she would have contacted EFDC if this area had not been cut, as it is EFDC who pick up the cost for fly tipping.

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c) Tree Risk Assessment

The tree risk assessment was completed on 6th November, and a copy of the report was attached to the agenda. Some works are needed, and quotes will be sourced for budget.

P14.1262 STANFORD RIVERS SIGN ON JUBILEE GREEN

Councillors **NOTED** that the works to renovate the Stanford Rivers sign on Jubilee Green had now taken place. The works took place over a period of four days (to allow the relevant coats to dry), and included a layer of anti-rust treatment, with the centre of the sign being painted in gold. The total cost of the works was £230 – slightly more than quoted.

P14.1263 BUDGET / PRECEPT 2025/2026

The January 2025 Parish Council meeting will be mainly to address and agree the budget/precept for 2025/2026. Councillors were asked to advise the Clerk of any specific items they would like to be considered for budget, along with details and costings. These should be with the Clerk before 24th December. The following two items were agreed:

- Tree Works
- CCTV

P14.1264 CALL FOR SUPPORT FROM THEYDON MOUNT PARISH COUNCIL

Councillors were recently sent a copy of an email from Peter Connell, Chair Theydon Mount Parish Council, regarding working together on matters which may be of common interest. For some years they have been trying to involve Essex Highways in their road safety issues. Mount Road, Epping Lane and Banks Lane are in particular all very busy rural roads with no speed limits (other than the 60mph national limit) and have inadequate signage at difficult bends and junctions. Theydon Mount PC have contacted ECC Highways, District and County Councillors, and copied in MPs, in particular about two black spots close to their boundaries with Theydon Garnon and Stapleford Tawney, and they have received informal support from these two Councils. However, they are also looking for support from neighbouring parishes (and residents who use the roads) to provide formal support by contacting Essex Highways and the other parties referred to in the emails. Cllr McIvor has advised he would be willing to facilitate a meeting between all neighbouring parishes, suggest if we all agree the wording, as a group we could consider signing a letter to the relevant organisations. The Chairman advised that he had sent an email to Highways in support of Cllr Connell, and expressed concern that if ECC continued to do things in exactly the same way, nothing would ever get done. It was **AGREED** to fully support at joint approach with our neighbouring parish councils in such matters.

P14.1265 .GOV EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR COUNCILLORS AND CLERK

All Councillors have now been setup with specific email addresses to be used specifically for Parish Council related Business. This protects not only the Council as a body, but also individual Parish Councillors, with regard to the data protection obligations of this Council. The Clerk has signed up to attend a 'Parish Helper' online session being run by the Government on 20th November in order to establish how / if the Parish Council can manage their own email accounts. There had been some difficulty with Councillors setting up their emails, and Cllr Tallon advised that the service we had signed up to was extremely basic. The Clerk would report back at the January meeting.

P14.1266 VEHICULAR SPEEDING AND SAFETY MATTERS IN THE PARISH

a) Community Speedwatch

Cllr Tallon advised that they had been expecting to run a joint speed session with the police, however despite waiting 40 minutes the police did not turn up. He had raised this matter with Janet Willey, who responded apologising stating that they emails had not gone out.

b) Speederbot

Cllr Adams provided a written report stating that after a very short period of data resurrection (a few days) information had again halted. Despite sending an email, no response had been received. The A113speederbot website just states "Services Paused". As previously reported the Parish Council is no longer providing any funding and the developer was supposedly taking it all on themselves. Cllr Adams reported that he didn't personally have the technical knowhow to run a speederbot for the Parish. Cllr Jackson advised that after speaking to somebody with technical knowledge, it was clear you needed to have a good IT skillset to run such a programme. It was suggested a notice looking for people with such a skillset should be placed in the next N&V, as we may be able to get volunteers to help.

P14.1267 DEATHS OF TWO LONG STANDING RESIDENTS

The Clerk had been advised of the sad passing of two long standing residents of Toot Hill:

- Allan EDMUNDS (lived in village for 54 years) – Funeral 24th November

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- Maureen MEADOWS (lived in village longer than Alan) – Funeral 19th November

The Clerk is liaising with the daughter of Mr Edmunds in the hope of including a short piece on both residents in the next edition of News and Views. Cllr Tallon advised that a Mr Phythian – Toot Hill resident – had also sadly passed away.

P14.1268 - WEBSITE

After emailing a link to a draft website, Councillors **AGREED** to move to a community based website, which was free of charge. The Clerk would make the relevant arrangements.

P14.1269 CHANGES TO PLANNING AT EFDC

Following recent changes to planning at EFDC, the Clerk advised Councillors of a current issue that had cropped up. Councillors recalled that subject to the Parish Council objecting (or 5 neighbours objecting) to an application with valid planning reasons, a planning application will be referred to one of the two new EFDC Planning Committees for consideration. However, Councillors this does not apply to the following types of applications:

- Householder Applications
- Variation or Removal of Conditions
- Advertisement Consent
- Listed Building Consent
- Demolition in Conservation Areas

These applications will be decided by a planning officer, regardless of any objections received, unless the EFDC Portfolio Holder for Planning or the Head of Planning decides it should go to committee. A District Councillor can raise this matter with the planning officer involved if he/she has concerns, who will then discuss it in a portfolio holder meeting to decide if it should go to committee. It was **AGREED** to provide a summary of the recent planning changes in News and Views so residents are aware.

P14.1270 LOCAL COUNCIL LIAISON COMMITTEE / CLERKS FORUM

Councillors **NOTED** that nearly all the Clerks in the Epping Forest District have come together to express their concern at the lack of useful communication streams with EFDC, and how matters between District and Parish Councils can be better addressed. Attached to the agenda was a draft of a question which will be placed on the EFDC Local Councils Liaison Committee meeting for 21st November.

P14.1271 CONSULTATIONS ON REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING

Councillors noted that the Government was consulting on possible changes to legislation to allow remote attendance at meetings of Parish Councils in certain circumstances, as well as proxy voting, the deadline for responses being 19th December. This had also been emailed out to Councillors as they are able to comment individually. It was agreed the Clerk would respond to support the proposals.

P14.1272 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. To CONSIDER any planning applications submitted to the Parish Council for comment as detailed below			
NIL			
2. To NOTE any planning applications that have been responded to via the Clerks delegated powers			
NIL			
3. To NOTE any planning applications upon which EFDC do not accept comments			
NIL			
4. To NOTE any other planning matters			
ENF/0307/20 APPEAL	Land at Colemans Farm Toot Hill Road, Stanford Rivers Ongar Essex CM59QN	Appeal against enforcement notice to remove glamping buildings and cease use for tourism.	Summary of PCs responses to the applications submitted, along with position of the PC (attached to agenda)
ENF/0103/23	Weald Lodge, Toot Hill Road	Car Sales from premises	Possible Breach – enforcement investigating (parishioner raised)
5. To NOTE the following planning decision by EFDC			
EPF/1742/24 FULL	Land Opposite Blackberry House, Toot Hill Road, Ongar, Essex CM5 9QP	A detached stable building and use of land for horse keeping for personal use (Revised scheme to EPF/143/17).	Approved with Conditions

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EPF/1775/24 FULL	Surrywood, 12 London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PH	Demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of a new Chalet bungalow.	Refused - PC had no objection - refused due to being awkward, visually incoherent and a visually incompatible modern addition, and impact on green belt.
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A question was raised as to the current status of the London Hoist Enforcement, to which the Clerk advised she had not heard, but assumed they had appealed however no formal notification had been received.

P14.1273 TOOT HILL SHOW

Councillors noted that at the Toot Hill Show AGM in October it was discussed that the number of volunteers from the local community would not sustain the show into the future. Many on the committee have served for over 10 years and it has been increasingly difficult to fill all the roles that are needed to run the show. Currently, most of the volunteers are friends and family of the committee, many of whom do not live locally. Despite calls for help over recent years, and a door knocking campaign this year, committed volunteers had not been forthcoming. Unfortunately, without new committee members coming forward, there will not be a show in 2025. Councillors noted that an article will go into News and Views regarding this.

P14.1274 VAS

Councillors noted that works to repair the VAS near Bridge Farm has now been completed, the final cost of the work being £585.12 (inc VAT).

- Solar Panels for Roof – reported earlier in the meeting.
- Councillors **NOTED** that the annual fire extinguisher service had been scheduled for 26th November.
- Radiator loose on wall at far side near fire escape – Agreed no further works needed at present.

P14.1275 NEWS AND VIEWS

The next copy of N&V will be late November.

P14.1276 FINANCIAL REPORTS

The following payments were **AGREED**.

Reference	To	For	Amount
BACS	Adriana Jones	Clerks Salary Oct & Nov 2024	£1,109.26
BACS	HMRC	PAYE Oct & Nov 2024	£277.40
BACS	D Wickham	THVH Cleaning and phone box tidy Sep and Oct	£164.00
D/D	EDF	Toot Hill Electricity Aug	£46.87 (£2.23 VAT)
BACS	Calor	Gas Standing Charge	£20.59 (VAT £0.98)
BACS	Adriana Jones	Mileage Reclaim & Ink	£83.09
D/D	EDF	Toot Hill Hall Electricity Sep	£42.39 (£2.02 VAT)
BACS	Westcotec	Repair VAS nr Bridge Farm	£585.12 (£97.52 VAT)
BACS	LVM Painting & Decorating	Renovate Stanford Rivers Sign	£230.00
BACS	Hallwood Associates	Tree Risk Assessment	£540.00 (£90.00)
BACS	Adriana Jones	Planning application	£147.00

Bank Balances as at 31st October 2024

Unity Current Account 4775	£ 17,329.91
Unity Deposit Account 4788	£ 86,811.51

INCOME: £ 105.89 – Floral Art club hires July-Nov

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- £ 26.00 – Neil Taylor St Margarets Church Hire 25/9
- £ 78.00 – Pilates hire June/July
- £ 35.75 – Ongar young Farmers hire 8/10
- £ 30.25 – L Cass Yoga hire 23/10
- £ 597.59 – Interest Deposit A/C

b. The bank reconciliation up to 30th November 2024 was reviewed alongside the bank statements.

P14.1277 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS/EVENTS

Councillors **NOTED** the date of the next meetings:

- 9th January 2025
- 13th March 2025
- 8th May 2025
- 17th July 2025 (note third Thursday, not second)
- 11th September 2025
- 13th November 2025

P14.1278 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The following matters have been rolled forward to the next meetings:

- Review of Policies and Procedures
- Planters by village signs

Meeting closed 19.33

Signed

Date