



**Minutes of the Meeting of Great Notley Parish Council held on 16th
June 2025 at the Community Centre Great Notley**

Meeting commenced at 7.31pm

Present: Councillors Butland, Crawford, Cunningham, Cogswell, Griffin, Pritchard, Ricci, Sheppard and the Clerk/RFO

Also in attendance were: Jenny Beck (BDC Project Manager) and 1 resident

25/59: Apologies

None.

25/60: Declarations of Interest

Councillors Butland and Cunningham declared an interest as a member of Braintree District Council and Essex County Council.

Councillor Ricci declared an interest as a member of Braintree District Council and its Planning Committee.

25/61: To consider and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2025 were **agreed** by Councillors as a correct record, proposed by Councillor Ricci and seconded by Councillor Cogswell, and these were signed by the Chairman.

25/62: Public Question Time

Council resolved to move agenda item 25/66.2 'Allotments' to PQT as the resident in attendance wished to speak on the matter. Jenny Beck ('JB') was also in attendance to discuss allotments as Project Manager for Braintree District Council. The resident informed Council that she has been on the allotments' waiting list for 26 years. JB provided the history to the allotments project, reminding Council of previous issues encountered with failed soil surveys in 2022 and earlier. Current plan is for raised beds to be designed and fitted to a designated site at the Country Park, behind the football pitches. The biggest cost factor identified as the purchasing and moving of soil to site. There are also considerable and complicated issues relating to having to comply Biodiversity Net Gain regulations (meaning the project must achieve 10% BNG) in order to comply with a central government requirement which has recently been brought into force. If and when an allotments site is established, Ecologists must, at regular intervals, measure the area for 30 years; something which will be at additional cost, which was not factored into original project plans or budgets. JB advised Council that,

based on a worst-case scenario allowing for some contingency, the project is now estimated to cost approximately £254k. This means there is an approximate £200k shortfall (this does not include any funds from the Parish Council). JB advised that there is an option for land managers & developers to “purchase credits” for BNG but this is a costly process and is not recommended. Cllr Ricci is willing to have some conversations with BDC regarding possible funding mechanisms, such as s106 or open spaces plan funding. Cllr Butland said we need to be realistic as to whether this project has now become untenable in light of current public sector funding and that the validity of the plan should be seriously considered. Council was reminded it once had the land for intended for the use of allotments, which it gave up to the District Council under the agreement that the District Council would provide alternative land. Council **agreed** that it should look for written evidence of this undertaking to use in final negotiations with the District Council before the next Parish Council meeting in July, at which a decision would be taken regarding the future of the allotments plan. The resident and JB then left the meeting.

Action: Cllr Ricci and the Council

25/63: Reports

25/63.1: Report from County Councillor

Cllr Butland advised that owing to the Elections postponement, a result of the Devolution in Essex to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority, in reality he is no longer the County Councillor representative. That said, he was able to provide an update which is that it is now known there will be a Mayoral Election on 1st Thursday of May 2026. The 15 authorities in Essex will be divided between 2 – 5 authorities by 26th September 2025, though the exact division is yet unknown. For Town & Parish Councils, it is expected that May 2027 Elections will go ahead. A letter providing an update to Town & Parish Councils was published last week and will be circulated this week, which refers to ‘neighbourhood Councils’. Cllr Butland also informed Council that he has received some complaints of overgrown hedges from residents.

25/63.2: Report from District Councillor

Cllr Ricci advised that the District Council is about to sign off on this year’s Rural Prosperity Funding for rural businesses and community groups. There is an expected £176k earmarked, with funding amounts of £2-10k available for individual businesses and groups. Community Groups do not need to match funding, whereas rural businesses must.

Cllr Cunningham reported on the recent Waste Review which received 8k responses. A huge change to habits is expected. The District Council has responded to shared concerns re the disposing of hygiene waste and has agreed to provide absorbent bags for these items which will be collected every 3 weeks. Properties with limited space will be offered a non-standard collection such as small boxes. The new collection service will come into effect on 1st June 2026, which will see the return of hardcopy collection calendars for households.

25/63.3: Reports from Councillors attending external meetings

The Chairman recently attended the NGCA Committee meeting and advised Council that it is not clear in what capacity she is invited as she is not a 'committee member'. Cllr Ricci clarified that she attends as GNPC representative and he attends as BDC representative, there solely for observing and providing updates on Council business. NGCA is still looking to recruit a Caretaker, so the opening and closing of the hall is being shared between Committee members.

25/64: Parish Clerk's Report

Clerk's Report

1. I sent the Annual Governance & Accountability Return to the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, on 20th May 2025 for our external audit. The dates for Exercise of Public Rights went live on 3rd June and will run until 14th July, as agreed by Council.
2. The shutter to our GNPC unit was repaired on 5th June and, at the same time, all three shutters were serviced by Essex Doors & Shutters Ltd. A report is listed as an item to this agenda.
3. The junior springer at Levens Way Play Park was repaired on 10th June as per the agreed cost.
4. I met with the Reverend at the Church on 10th June to discuss a few matters involving the Church, one being whether the Church would be willing to act as nominated monitor for the Feed Ducks Initiative. Rev Rachel said she would approach the Church Committee at its meeting that evening.
5. I have had to defer the matter of replacing the white gate at Bridge End Lane to July's Council meeting as it is taking far longer than expected to find accredited contractors that can quote for the work in order to comply with the NRSWA regulations.
6. We were recently informed that the interest rate for our Saffron Account will be reducing on 10th June by a total of 0.50 percentage points.
7. Our electricity usage for the month of May cost a total of £6.22 (measuring at 24.58 units for the month). This is significantly less than the average £55 we were paying each month for fuel.
8. I had an online meeting with Wirehouse – our newly appointed HR Consultancy – on 11th June to provide all of our HR related policies to the team for review. It is expected that Wirehouse will update these policies using latest legislation and guidance by mid August.
9. Our Fidelity Guarantee has now been increased to £250k cover as agreed at our May meeting.
10. Following Council's decision to proceed with two pages in Braintree CommunityAd magazine for its community communications, I have opted for the following publication dates:
Braintree41 – copy deadline – 14th July – print date – 21st July – distribution from – 4th August and Braintree42 – copy deadline – 15th September – print date – 22nd September – distribution from – 6th October.

Issue	First raised	Comment
Transfer of land between developers and Braintree District Council – <i>agreement reached between BDC and Countryside Properties regarding land to be transferred and commuted</i>	May 2012	Ongoing

<i>sum. Only outstanding issue is the future of the Unity Hand sculpture</i>		
Application for 20mph speed limit within White Court section of the Parish –feasibility to be undertaken and current listed in the ‘awaiting funding’ list of the LHP	July 2020	Progressed as above – awaiting signage design to be approved and issued
Tree Warden – voluntary position continues to be advertised	September 2022	Remains vacant
Defective Manhole Cover in Stanstrete Field has been reported to Essex Highways but remains in a poor state. Issue was reported to us after resident expressed concern for public safety.	January 2025	Escalated to County Councillors
Request for Pedestrian/patrolled Crossing at Bridge End Lane opposite the school – for LHP consideration.	March 2025	Referred to Councillor Butland for LHP submission

The Clerk/RFO drew Council's particular attention to points 4 and 5. Point 4 with an update that the Church did not want to support the Ducks Feeds Initiative or the Free Little Library. Point 5 was highlighted to explain that this had caused a delay in sourcing 3 quotations to replace the gate at Bridge End Lane. Council **agreed** that in light of the difficulties finding a contractor which would be accredited to satisfy the NRSWA regulations, it would be permissible for the Clerk/RFO to present 1 quotation at the next meeting for consideration.

Council also reviewed the 'issues table'. The outstanding issue of the Unity Hands Sculpture should be addressed. It was recommended that the Clerk/RFO should contact Josie Falco to arrange an Environmental Health Assessment. Cllr Butland confirmed that there is a forthcoming LHP meeting on 26th June at which progress of the 20mph speed limit can be raised. He also confirmed that he had received a request for the pedestrian crossing at Bridge End Lane and for another crossing elsewhere in the locality but that neither seemed feasible.

The report was otherwise **accepted** by Council.

Action: The Clerk/RFO

25/65: Financial Matters

25/65.1 Bank Reconciliations and Bank Statements

The bank reconciliations calculated to 31st May 2025 and corresponding bank statements were proposed to be approved by Councillor Cogswell, seconded by Councillor Cunningham and **approved** by the Council.

25/65.2 Payments & Receipts for Approval

Councillor Ricci proposed to approve the payments, which was seconded by Councillor Sheppard and the following payments were **approved** –

May 2025

Direct Debits

06/05/25	Radius Telematics (Tracker)	5.27*
12/05/25	ICO (Renewal of Data Protection)	47.00
14/05/25	Radius Telematics (Tracker)	19.20*
23/05/25	<u>Lloyds Card</u>	
	Amazon (Union Jack Flag)	21.99
	Amazon (No parking sign)	5.99
	Amazon (Clips for flag)	4.99
	Microsoft 360	1.99
	Argos (Printer Ink)	19.49
	Burt & Mee Catering (VE Day Cakes)	50.00
	Tesco (Milk for Mtg)	0.85
	Baker Ross (VE Day Crafts)	39.80
	The Works (VE Day Crafts)	15.00
	Poundland (VE Day Decorations)	7.50
	Amazon (VE Day Decorations)	87.67
	B&Q (Paint for American Memorial)	38.00
	Tesco (VE Day Food)	41.25
	A Plan (Partial Refund of Van Insurance)	-227.93(CR)
	Monthly card fee	3.00
		<u>109.59</u>

*As explained in last month's report, amounts £5.27 and £9.60 were incorrectly charged by Radius. These amounts have been credited to our account, meaning June's monthly subscription is £0 and £5.27 will be deducted from July's subscription

Online Payments - Current Account (Unity) – 19th May to 16th June 2025

Salaries	May Staff Salaries	4,581.60
Essex Pension Fund	April Pension Contributions	1,794.52
Ann Wood	Internal Audit Inspection	190.00
Wirehouse Employer Services	HR Consultancy	1,065.60

Community Action Suffolk Ltd	Renewal of PC Insurance	1,636.48
HMRC Cumbernauld	May Tax & NI Liabilities	1,445.90
Clerk/RFO	Reimbursement of Expenses	31.88
Perspective Landscapes	Grass Cutting 11 th & 30 th April	168.00
NGCA	April Hall Hire & Month 1 Electricity	13.09
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Service Charge	9.30

All Receipts in May 2025 – Current Account (Unity)

We Buy Any Car	Disposable of Citroen Berlingo	4,621.60
DVLA (Cheque banked)	Partial refund of Annual Vehicle Tax	83.75

Online Payments made in June 2025 - calculated up to 16th June 2025

Community Action Suffolk	Increase to Fidelity Guarantee	24.62
Mortimer Contracts	Repair to Junior Springer	510.00
Essex Doors & Shutters Ltd	Repair to Shutter Door	274.80
Essex Doors & Shutters Ltd	Shutter Doors Service	216.00

25/66: Substantive matters for consideration

25/66.1 Annual Review of Policy Documents

The Clerk/RFO had inadvertently omitted to send the two revised documents – Standing Orders and Financial Regulations – which had been prepared with track changes to Councillors for review. Therefore, these two documents will be deferred to July's meeting. In the meantime, Council **accepted** the proposed changes to the following documents:

- Emergency Plan
- First Aid Needs Assessment
- FOI Scheme
- Risk Management Policy
- Scheme of Delegation

Council also reviewed the following documents, which required no amendments:

- Document Management Policy

- Media Policy
- Grant Policy
- Policy on Early Planning Consultation

Action: The Clerk/RFO

25/66.2 To receive an update on the provision of Allotments

Taken under Public Question Time.

25/66.3 To consider the costs to replace the bench seating at Windermere Drive

Council considered the 3 options for standard bench seating presented by BDC and 1 option for a commemorative bench from Royal British Legion. Council unanimously **agreed** to the commemorative bench seating from RBL at a cost of £800 for a 3 person seat, which was proposed by Cllr Cogswell, seconded by Cllr Crawford and **approved** by Council. Council also **approved** the quote from BDC to install the bench, which will need to be anchored down into the ground. Current lead time on the bench is 6 weeks. Cllr Ricci kindly offered to remove and dispose of the faulty bench on behalf of the Council, to avoid any risk to the public.

Action: The Clerk/RFO and Cllr Ricci

25/66.4 To consider the cost to repaint the White Gate at Tesco and the Village Post next to the duck pond

Cllr Cogswell proposed to approve the quotation from True Colours, which was seconded by Cllr Ricci and this was unanimously **approved** by the Council.

Action: The Clerk/RFO

25/66.5 To receive the Annual Inspection Report for Levens Way Play Park

Council **accepted** the annual report. It was noted that the report made no mention of the shrinking wet pour to one area of the flooring, which had been reported to the Clerk by Cllr Crawford last week. The Clerk advised that she would follow this up with Seagrave Inspection Services and Mortimer Contracts to see whether the work is necessary at this time.

Action: The Clerk/RFO

25/66.6 To consider the Service Report for the Shutters to the Storage Unit

Council has been advised by Essex Doors & Shutters Ltd that the manual roller shutters do not meet current regulations and that each shutter needs to be fitted with a safety break to satisfy current legislation. The Clerk/RFO had been expecting a quote from Essex Doors & Shutters Ltd in time for this meeting but it hadn't been received. Cllr Butland proposed that delegated authority be issued to the Chairman and the Clerk/RFO to approve the cost outside of

Council under Financial Regulation 5.15, which was seconded by Cllr Cunningham and this motion was unanimously **approved** by Council.

Action: The Chairman and Clerk/RFO

25/66.7 To continue to consider the ‘Free Little Library’ initiative

The Clerk/RFO informed Council that the Church did not wish to be involved in this initiative. The Clerk/RFO also highlighted to Council that there appears to be an initial start up cost to purchase the ‘library box’, which ranged from £100-400. Whilst Council agreed that it was a worthy idea, in reality there is no suitable location for this type of enterprise. The resident who had initially raised this idea with the Council will be informed.

Action: The Clerk/RFO

25/67: Planning applications, Tree Preservation Orders and other planning matters

Cllr Ricci left the room.

The following applications were noted (no comments were sought from Council):

25/00944/PLD - Application for a Proposed Lawful Development Certificate Conversion of existing garage to form habitable accommodation. New fenestration to front and rear elevation, increase in height of existing perimeter walls plus new wall to rear elevation - 26 Cuckoo Way Great Notley Essex CM77 7YG

25/67.1 New Applications within the Parish

Application No.	Application	Representations
25/01130/TPO	50 Skiddaw Close Great Notley Essex CM77 7UN - Notice of intent to carry out works to tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 10/2010 Oak Tree G1- 2.5 - 3 m over all reduction & a 5 m crown lift– Deadline 16 th June 2025	Straightforward, cannot see any issue with the plans. No objection.
25/00911/REM	Land West Of Horizon 120 Phase 2 Horizon Boulevard Great Notley Braintree Essex – Application for Approval of Reserved Matters (in respect of Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale)	No objection.

	<p>pursuant to the Outline element of the Hybrid planning consent 23/02807/OUT (granted 31.07.2024): for the erection of three commercial buildings with a total GEA of 37,637sqm for Storage or Distribution (Use class B8) and/or General industrial (Use class B2), with ancillary office (Use class E(g)(i)), and approval of conditions O4 (Phasing Plan), O22 (Noise Impact Assessment), O30 (Lighting Strategy), O29 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy), O33 (Building Maintenance) and O34 (Energy Strategy) attached to application 23/02807/OUT– Deadline 18th June 2025</p>	
25/01100/FUL	<p>Verge Adjacent A131 London Road Great Notley Essex –</p> <p>Proposed construction and operation of a micro energy storage project – Deadline 18th June 2025</p>	<p>Note 1 objection raised by a neighbouring property. Proposed construction appears to be standard building size.</p> <p>No comment.</p>
25/01132/TPO	<p>48 Skiddaw Close Great Notley Essex CM77 7UN –</p> <p>Notice of intent to carry out works to tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 10/2010 Oak Tree G1-Reduce overhanging branches by approximately 2 m to previous pruning points to help maintain the tree and increase longevity. Oak tree at 46 Skiddaw Close - cut back over extending limbs to appropriate pruning points to reduce end weight approximately 2-3 m to help prevent failure over and increase longevity of tree – Deadline 18th June 2025</p>	<p>Straightforward, cannot see any issue with the plans.</p> <p>No objection.</p>

25/67.2 To note results of previous planning applications

Cllr Ricci returned to the room.

The following results were **noted** -

Application No.	Application	Result
25/00941/HH	6 Notley Green Great Notley Essex CM77 7US - Proposed single-storey side extension and partial garage conversion, insertion of 2No. Skylights to side elevation – Deadline 5 th June 2025	Pending Consideration – determination deadline 24 th June 2025
25/01021/TPO	90 Skiddaw Close Great Notley Essex CM77 7UR – Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order 10/2010/TPO - G5 T1 & T2- Oak in rear garden along boundary line - reduce overall crown by approximately 6-8 meters – Deadline 5 th June 2025	Pending Consideration – determination deadline 1 st July 2025
25/00965/SCO	Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm South Of The A120 Between Bannister Green And Bartholomew Green Fentons Road Rayne – Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) Regulations 10 and 11, Scoping Consultation regarding an application by Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm Ltd (the applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for the Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm (the proposed development) – Deadline 20 th May 2025	Unable to now find this case on BDC's Planning Portal

25/68: Matters for next agenda

- Allotments
- Revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Quotation for White Gate at Bridge End Lane

25/69 Chairman to close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm.