

Minutes of the Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at Greenstead Green Village Hall after the AGM.

These are draft minutes and yet to be agreed by the Parish Council.

Present.

Cllr. Paul Foster. Chairman.

Cllr. Ian Pleasance

Cllr. Derek Mason. Vice-Chairman.

Cllr. Jeremy Siggers

Cllr. Gemma Todd.

Cllr. Debbie Wass

Amanda Degnan – Clerk to the Parish Council.

22 Members of the public

54/25 Minutes: Item 1: To approve the minutes of the March ordinary meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting held in March 2025 were duly approved

Proposed Cllr. Mason, Seconded Cllr. Todd. **Item 2: Matters arising from the March minutes that are not on the agenda.** All matters arising were on the agenda.

55/25 County Councillor's report. In the absence of County Cllr. Siddall there was no update. The Clerk was instructed to email Cllr. Siddall for a report. **Action:** Clerk.

56/25 District Councillor's report. In the absence of District Cllr. Schwier there was no update.

57/25 Finance: Item 1: To agree the accounts for payment. These were circulated prior to the meeting. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Todd. All agreed. The accounts for payment were duly approved.

Method		Payee	Amount	Reason
SO		Mrs A J Degnan	£349.05	April Salary pd 15/04/25
SO		Mrs A J Degnan	£349.05	May Salary pd 15/05/25
BACS		Village Hall	£40.00	hall rental April and May
BACS		Mrs A J Degnan	£22.50	expenses
Card		Ionos	£6.00	website pd 17/03/25
Card		Sainsburys	£73.04	Refreshments for APM pd 8/4/25
Card		Ionos	£18.00	website pd 17/04/25 and domain
BACS		RCCE	£61.80	Membership pd 30/4/25
BACS		HMRC	£26.00	Income tax pd 14/4/25
Card		Three	£30.00	Top up of phone pd 27/3/25

BACS		EALC/NALC	£263.29	Membership
BACS		Clear Council	£898.28	Insurance
		Total payments for May 2025	£2,137.01	

Item 2. To agree to the Clerk reclaiming VAT of just over £2000.00. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Pleasance. All agreed. Approved.

58/25 To receive and approve the Annual Governance Return. (AGAR) Item 1: The Annual Internal Audit Report is received and noted. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. Received and noted. **Item 2: The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) is approved.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. Approved. **Item 3: The Accounting Statements (Section 2) are approved.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. Approved. **Item 4: The Certificate of Exemption is approved.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. Approved.

59/25 Planning and Braintree District Council (BDC) Planning applications.

Item 1: Planning Applications: APPLICATION NO : 25/00897/FUL

DESCRIPTION : Change of use of land to include 4no. traveller pitches and erection of stable block and manege (D2) 32m x 30m. LOCATION : Ayletts Farm, Plaistow Green Road, Greenstead Green. This relates to the traveller pitches only as the manege and stable block had already been granted planning permission. Cllr. Pleasance had declared a NPI (see AGM minutes Item 45/25) in this item and took no part in the discussions.

The Chairman at this point adjourned the meeting to allow representatives of the Traveller community and their Planning Agent, Guy Clark, to address the Parish Council directly and answer questions from the Councillors. A brief statement was read out by Mr O'Connor explaining their reasons for the application. Cllr. Foster noted that their application statement did not reference BDC's LPP34 policy regarding housing in rural areas. It was also noted that some work had taken place at the time of the application to enable people on site to have a fixed location. An enforcement notice had since been issued and the application was now retrospective.

There was a discussion, and questions were raised by councillors regarding the need for pitches, mobile caravans, and management of the site. It was noted that Traveller sites are strictly monitored and inspected by BDC. Any violations are quickly dealt with by BDC Planning Enforcement. The manege and stables would be for private use. It was agreed that the Councillors would visit the site on Saturday 17th May 2025 before making a decision.

Residents raised concerns about the size of the site and the potential for extra caravans, but it was explained that the Parish Council can only look at what is in the application.

There being no further questions the representatives of the Traveller community and Mr Clark were thanked for their time and attendance at the meeting. The meeting was then reconvened.

The Clerk was instructed to contact BDC Planning regarding a planning application for a life-size T-Rex statue in the garden of a residence in Sloe Hill. This property is within the parish, but the council had not been consulted on the matter. **Action:** Clerk.

Item 2: Update on previous Planning applications. For information only.

25/00294/FUL Greenstead Hall application conversion of stables – still to be determined. Cllr. Mason reported that he had written a letter to Enforcement regarding the letter written by the Planning Officer to the Applicant but had heard nothing.

25/00415/COUPA Moat Farm – barn conversion – no as barn is in a poor state of repair.

25/00629/COUPA Bluebridge Farm – requires prior approval.

Item 3 Update on BDC Planning Committee meeting 22nd April 2025 regarding Bournebridge Hill. Cllr. Foster.

Cllr. Foster had attended and spoken at this meeting where they discussed the landscaping of the site. He had expressed disappointment at the committee meeting that the developers had failed to engage with the parish council and residents. BDC District Councillors noted this and instructed the developers to engage with the parish council in future.

60/25 Braintree District Local Plan Review Call for sites. Hare and Hounds

GGHR2503 Housing, Self and custom build, Community facility. This is being discussed at BDC Local Plan Review meeting on 28th May 2025. Cllr. Foster will be in attendance and may ask the committee to place TPO's on the trees on the site to prevent removal.

61/25 Playing Field: Item 1: Update on playing field. Gate latch repaired. 3 posts need replacing. **Proposal:** To agree for Cllr. Mason to purchase 3 posts from Jacksons at a cost of £15.65 each - £46.95 + VAT in total. Proposed Cllr. Pleasance, Seconded Cllr. Foster. All agreed. Approved, **Item 2: Update on the progress of obtaining 3 quotes for the landscaping and reseeding of the additional 4-5m of land in the Playing Field.** Alan Kemp for £3300 plus VAT. Paul G for £3650.00 plus VAT. D.Mason £2,475 + VAT (cost). **Proposal:** To accept D.Mason's quote for £2,475. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Pleasance. All Agreed with one abstention from Cllr. Mason. Approved.

Item 3: Update on Operations Inspections. The Clerk had discovered that Gosfield Parish Council use BDC Parks and Open Spaces Department to conduct their inspections. She had sent an email to the department and was waiting to hear back from them. **Action:** To be placed on the July agenda.

Item 4: Update on purchasing new benches for the Playing Field from Parish Council funds. The Clerk reported that benches cost from £300 upwards. It was

agreed that 2 benches be placed by the Pétanque pitch. Cllr. Mason will install a concrete base for them. **Action:** Cllr. Mason.

62/25 Highways: Item1: Parish Councillors Highway issues including the issue of vegetation overgrowth in Russells Road and Chapel Hill. Cllr. Pleasance had walked and filmed the route of Sloe Hill to White Ash Green. There had been many issues along the route including a collapsing bank. Cllr. Pleasance will log the issues first with Essex County Council (ECC) Highways and will include What3Words locations and photos. **Action:** Cllr. Pleasance.

Item 2: Update on approaching ECC Highways and request that Burtons Green Road be considered for 'Quiet Lane' status. Cllr. Todd. Cllr. Todd had no further update on this matter. It had been put forward to the Local Highway Panel but due to the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) it was now delayed. A traffic survey had been conducted which showed no speed restrictions were needed. It was noted that a local field was up for sale and there had been talk of it becoming a glamping site which does not require planning permission if only open for 60 days of the year for up to 50 pitches. If this goes ahead there will be an increase in traffic in Burtons Green. **Action:** Monitor site.

Item 3: To consider writing to Essex County Council Highways and asking for an update regarding the lack of progress on issues sent to them by residents and the Parish Council in particular White Ash Green and the continuing problems at Crocklands and pavements/paths in general in Greenstead Green. The pavement at Crocklands had been due to be repaired in October 2024 but this had not happened. Other items had been reported including signage problems and nothing had been done. Cllr. Pleasance had raised the issue as he was receiving complaints from residents about nothing being done even though items had been reported to ECC Highways and this was reflecting badly on the Parish Council. It was agreed to write to both County Cllr. Siddall and ECC Highways for an update. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Pleasance. All agreed. **Action:** Clerk.

63/25 A131. Update from Cllr. Pleasance regarding letter written to Cllr. Siddall asking for a review of the A131 regarding safety and speed. Cllr. Pleasance had sent a letter to County Cllr. Siddall regarding the A131. County Cllr. Siddall had responded and forwarded the letter onto ECC Highways. A week later there had been another tragic incident and Cllr. Pleasance had written to County Cllr. Siddall again who had responded. There had been no further correspondence from County Cllr. Siddall or ECC Highways. Cllr. Pleasance was thanked for his work on this.

64/25 Website: To consider applying for a .gov.uk website and emails. Cllr. Pleasance. There is a desire from Central Government for all councils to use .gov.uk. Cllr. Pleasance listed 3 options.

Option1: Keep our current domain name and Ionos hosting. $£12 + (12 * £6) = £84$ per year

Option 2: Register gov.uk with Mythic Beasts and host with Ionos. £71.50 one-time, then $£15 + (12 * £6) = £87$ per year

Option 3: Register gov.uk with Mythic Beasts and host with Mythic Beasts. £71.50 one-time, then £15+25 = £40 per year.

Proposal: To go with option 3. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. Approved. **Action:** Cllr. Pleasance.

65/25 Devolution: Update from Cllr. Foster who attended the Webinar on Essex Devolution in April. Cllr. Foster was unable to attend this meeting due to work commitments. It is proposed that there will be a mayor and 5 Unitary Authorities. The final proposal will go to ECC Cabinet in September. If approved Unitary elections will be held in May 2027 and the changes will be implemented in 2028.

66/25 Public comment. There is an Oak tree in the garden of 7 Crocklands, an Eastlight property, whose roots have broken up the pavement and damaged a water pipe. Residents have written to Eastlight about their concerns but there have been no site visits from Eastlight. The resident was asked to send the emails to the Clerk to deal with. **Action:** Clerk. There is a dead tree in Stisted Road. **Action:** Cllr. Mason to send details to the Clerk.

A resident asked if there had been any update on Truecam. This had been spoken about at the March meeting. County Cllr. Cunningham had passed our email onto the police. **Action:** Clerk to contact PC. Draper for an update.

There is a Greenwatch WhatsApp group Cllr. Wass is already a member, Cllr's. Pleasance and Todd to join.

A resident asked a question regarding The Hare and Hounds and its community building. Cllr. Mason explained that at this point in the Call for Sites there is no need to provide an explanation. He felt it was highly unlikely that the site would be granted as the village is regarded as a not sustainable village.

No update regarding dog bins.

On the road to Earls Colne a footpath is collapsing into a ditch. Resident was asked to report it to ECC Highways.

67/25 To receive reports from outside bodies, training courses, Village Representatives. Jean Hastings, Neighbourhood Watch, had sent a report in. At the Annual Parish Meeting she had asked for volunteer co-ordinators for the village and someone had come forward.

68/25 Future agenda items. Items on the agenda.

There being no further items to discuss. The meeting closed at 9pm.

Next Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 16th July 2025. 7.15pm Village Hall.

Signed.....

Chairman – Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council.

Date.....

Amanda Degnan

Amanda Degnan – Clerk to the Parish Council, C/O Greenstead Green Post Office, Greenstead Green Farm, Greenstead Green, CO9 1QY. 07782209224 . parishclerk@greensteadgreenpc.org.uk. WWW. greensteadgreenpc.org.uk