Greenstead Green & Halstead Rural

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Minutes

for the ordinary meeting of Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council

held in **Greenstead Green Village Hall**, Grange Hill, Greenstead Green, Essex, CO9 1QZ
on **Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 7:15pm**

Chairman:	Cllr Paul Foster
Vice-Chairman:	Cllr Derek Mason
Parish Councillors:	Cllrs Ian Pleasance, Gemma Todd, Deborah Wass
Other Councillors:	County Cllr Isi Rocha, District Cllr Peter Schwier
Officers:	Amy Wharton (Clerk)
Absent:	Cllrs Chris Butler and Jeremy Siggers

26/7/1 Welcome from the Chairman

Cllr Foster welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

26/7/2 Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

26/7/3 Declarations of interest

Cllr Mason declared an interest in the Forest House planning application and in the proposed payment to D Mason Developments.

Cllr Wass declared an interest in the Village Hall grant application as a member of the management committee.

26/7/4 Minutes of the last meeting

The Council agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2026 as an accurate record.

Proposer: Cllr Foster, Seconder: Cllr Pleasance
Agreed unanimously.

26/7/5 County Councillor's report

Cllr Rocha provided an update on Essex County Council activity.

Councillors accepted Cllr Rocha's offer to do a "walkabout" of the Parish to identify issues needing attention.

Cllr Foster highlighted the landscaping development at Greenstead Hall, expressing he was surprised the highways officer raised no objection. Cllr Rocha to investigate.

26/7/6 District Councillor's report

- Cllr Schwier reported that Braintree District Council (BDC) continues to oppose any expansion of the Wethersfield asylum accommodation, maintaining the site is unsuitable.
- Work on the BDC Local Plan continues, with councillor briefings and public meetings. The aim is to submit it by the end of the year to avoid falling under new national planning rules.
- S106 funding has delivered new tennis courts in Halstead and an outdoor gym in Coggeshall.
- The Council and Community Grant Scheme is open for what may be its final year due to Local Government Reorganisation, offering grants of up to **£1,500** for community capital projects.
- A district-wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is being introduced to address anti-social behaviour.
- BDC is meeting and exceeding affordable housing targets.
- New swimming pool contracts have increased visitor numbers.
- Street improvement works in Halstead and Witham are awaiting final Essex County Council approval.
- The new recycling service launched on 1 June. Initial issues are being addressed, with residents asked to allow two collection cycles before the service is reviewed. Hot weather has caused some operational delays. Residents are encouraged to report issues to BDC, who will make adjustments where possible.

Recycling Service Discussion

- Cllr Pleasance said concerns raised during the public consultation about recycling bin capacity appear to have been ignored.
- Cllr Mason raised concerns about late collections; he said the service should be judged after the review, and noted that any ongoing issues after three months would need addressing. He also asked about the cost of the Coggeshall outdoor gym.
- Cllr Schwier said the service would be reviewed after two collection cycles, with adjustments such as additional recycling bins where needed. He said some issues were due to residents adapting to the new system and recycling contamination, and asked residents to allow time for the changes to bed in following government recycling requirements and public consultation.
- A resident added that adding glass to the recycling collection had reduced available bin capacity.
- Cllr Rocha said BDC chose how to implement a four-week collection cycle for paper and dry mixed recyclables. Many residents felt ignored and frustrated by poor communication.
- Cllr Schwier said customer service demand had significantly increased call waiting times and that additional support and community engagement were in place.

26/7/7 Clerk's report

- Residents have reported two highways matters to be followed up with Essex Highways with support from Cllr Rocha: one regarding giant hogweed and another concerning overgrown hedges.
- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) has been completed and is on the agenda for approval.

- The noticeboard has been updated.

26/7/8 Finance

a) The Council agreed the Annual Governance Accountability Return (AGAR) accounts and exemption form for 2025/26.
Proposed: Cllr Foster, Seconded: Cllr Todd
Passed unanimously.

b) The Council noted the renewal of the insurance

c) The Council discussed the request for a grant from BASICS Essex and decided not to donate.

Cllr Wass left the room

d) The Council discussed the grant request from the village hall management committee and decided not to make this payment.

Cllr Wass returned to the room

e) The Council agreed to pay £885.00 (ex. VAT) to M D Landscapes (Anglia) Ltd for grass cutting.
Proposer: Cllr Foster, Seconder: Cllr Pleasance
Passed unanimously

Cllr Mason left the room

f) The payment to D. Mason Developments Ltd was deferred with the agreement of the supplier.

Cllr Mason returned to the room

g) The Council agreed to pay the invoice to Playsafety for £123.00 ex. VAT.
Proposer: Cllr Foster, Seconder: Cllr Todd
Agreed unanimously.

h) The following payment schedule was agreed.
Proposer: Cllr Foster, Seconder: Cllr Todd
Agreed unanimously.

Payment to	Description	Net	Gross
Payments to be made			
Amy Wharton	Clerk Wages April-July	£1289.60	£1289.60
DM Payroll Service	April-September payroll administration	£66.00	79.20
HMRC	Income tax April - June	£334.60	£334.60
Payments made between meetings			
Malware bytes	Anti-virus software	£49.98	£59.98
Clear insurance	Council insurance policy	£1422.31	£1422.31
Payments taken by direct debit			
Mythic Beasts	Monthly web hosting May & June	£10.00	£12.00
Ionos	Monthly web hosting	£7.00	£8.40

26/7/9 Planning

a) Regarding Stanstead Hall:
   - A resident raised concerns about three large buildings under construction, questioning whether all the works had the necessary planning permission.
   - Cllr Foster advised that there were three planning permissions associated with the site and that the works for the new barn appeared to be in accordance with what has been granted.
   - Cllr Isi Rocha noted that if works affected the public footpath, Essex Highways will need to be consulted.
   - Cllr Foster provided the latest planning reference to Cllr Rocha, who agreed to investigate further.

b) The proposed landscaping development at Greenstead Hall was covered under the County Councillor's update item.

c) Discussion regarding other planning applications:

Wards Farm

The Council agreed the revised proposal was more proportionate compared with the previous application for a significantly larger extension which was refused by BDC. It was agreed that the Council would raise no objection to the revised application.

Halstead Hall

Cllr Foster disputed the applicant's claims regarding BDC's housing land supply and raised concerns about the lack of consultation.
Cllr Rocha raised wider concerns about planning policy, housing targets and Section 106 contributions.
It was agreed to object to the application, with detailed comments to be prepared and agreed by Councillors.

26/7/10 Braintree District Local Plan

BDC is expected to publish its preferred option in September, and the Parish Council will respond at that stage.

26/7/11 Playing Field

Cllr Mason reported that the RoSPA inspection identified only minor issues requiring attention. Missing signs will be addressed and swing seats are on order. Cllr Foster asked for an update on the outstanding works at the next meeting.

26/7/12 Highways

- Concerns were raised regarding the condition of Church Road. Cllr Wass advised that the issue had been reported several times. Details/What3Words location will be sent to Cllr Rocha for follow-up.
- Cllr Rocha provided an update on BDC's highways approach, explaining that the former Members' Highway Initiative funding has been redirected to provide additional road repair crews following the declaration of a pothole emergency.

- Cllr Pleasance raised concerns about speeding near Gosfield School, with a further request to reduce the speed limit. Cllr Rocha added that speeds outside schools should be a maximum of 30mph.

26/7/13 Public Participation

- A resident raised concerns regarding the Greenstead Hall planning application, including whether the lakes shown are existing or proposed excavations, where any excavated material would go, and the location of the outdoor amphitheatre close to the village boundary.
- Cllr Mason raised concerns about potential late-night noise impacts. Cllr Foster recommended that a representation should be submitted to BDC by anyone concerned about the current planning application, in addition to the Parish Council.
- A resident questioned the reasons for the hosepipe ban and raised concerns about water supply, including usage by the Rivenhall incinerator. Discussion took place regarding increased usage, infrastructure capacity and reduced water pressure affecting some properties.

26/7/14 Reports from outside bodies and representatives

- A representative of the Neighbourhood Watch provided an update on changes within the police force, noting the loss of the Community Rural Police Officer role. Crime information previously provided for the Dispatch magazine will now be included in a larger monthly update from the District Commander.
- Greenwatch will hold a fete at The Grange on 9 August, with proceeds split between the Church and Greenwatch.

26/7/15 Future agenda items

The Clerk to raise lack of apologies with absent councillors.

26/7/16 Date of next meeting

16th September 2026 (note: Chairman unavailable)

Meeting closed 20:40