



# GESTINGTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk / RFO: Kevin B. Money  
7 Roach Vale, Colchester, Essex. CO4 3YN  
Tel: 07810781509 – Email: [gestingthorpepc@gmail.com](mailto:gestingthorpepc@gmail.com)

**Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>. May 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Cllrs D. Smith (Chairman), T. Flower (Vice-Chairman), A. Cooper, C. Craig, P. Collett, S. Bolter, Leslie Crumpton-Taylor (Internal Auditor) and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk).  
There were no members of the public present.

**027/2021 2020/21 Chairman Welcome.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to this the first face-to-face meeting in over a year

**028/2021 Apologies for Absence** were received from BDC Cllr W. Scattergood

**029/2021 Election of Chairman for the 2021/22 year.**

Cllr A. Cooper proposed Cllr D. Smith as Chairman for the 2021/22 year. Cllr T. Flower seconded.

**All Agreed.** The Chairman then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr D. Smith then thanked the Councillors for again showing support in him

**030/2021 Election of Vice-Chairman for the 2021/22 year.**

Cllr D. Smith proposed Cllr T. Flower as Vice-Chairman for the 2021/22 year. Cllr S. Bolter seconded.

**All Agreed.** The Vice-Chairman then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

**031/2021 Election of Appointments and Employment committee**

The Chairman asked that the various appointments and committees for 2021/22 be agreed

Leslie Crumpton-Taylor Internal Auditor:

Cllr D. Smith PC Chairman, Employment, Planning:

Cllr T. Flower Tree Warden, Planning, Playing Fields, Footpaths, Employment:

Cllr S. Bolter Highways, Planning, Transport, Gestingthorpe Education Foundation, Broadband:

Cllr P. Collett Highways, Planning, Playing Field: Cllr A. Cooper Employment, Playing Field,

Gestingthorpe Education Foundation, Highways:

Cllr C. Craig Footpaths, Planning, Village Hall Representative, Website and Facebook:

Cllr J. Nott Employment, Playing Field, Highways

Cllr D. Smith proposed the new appointments, Cllr C. Craig seconded. **All Agreed**

**032/2021 To re-adopt all Council policies**

The Chairman proposed that the 2021/22 GPC Policies be agreed en-bloc. Cllr A. Cooper seconded.

**All Agreed**

**033/2021 2021/22 Chairman to Close Annual meeting**

The Chairman then closed the AGM meeting at 7.40pm

## **FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Cllrs D. Smith (Chairman), T. Flower (Vice-Chairman), A. Cooper, C. Craig, P. Collett, S. Bolter, Leslie Crumpton-Taylor (Internal Auditor) and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk).  
There were no members of the public present.

**034/2021 Chairman welcome.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

**035/2021 Apologies for Absence** were received from BDC Cllr W. Scattergood

**036/2021 Declaration of Interest**

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Pecuniary or non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the Agenda.

Cllr A. Cooper declared a NPI in anything to do with the cricket club

Minutes of the Parish Council AGM and Full Council meetings held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>. May 2021

**NEW PC WEBSITE: <https://www.gestingthorpepc.co.uk>**



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## **037/2021 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Gestingthorpe Parish Council**

To receive and agree the minutes of the GPC meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup>. March 2021

Cllr C. Craig proposed that the minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting. Cllr T. Flower seconded. **All Agreed**

## **038/2021 Chairman's report and any update since last meeting**

**Chairs Report** - On 15th April last, the working party set up to look into reforming Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC) held a further meeting by Zoom. There is positive interest from a large number of Parish Councils to reform the Association in order that we can actively engage with ECC and BDC with a collective voice. I am in favour and propose that we should join. There will be an initial membership fee of £40.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr D. Smith proposed joining the BALC. Cllr. S. Bolter seconded. **All Agreed**

The 2 representatives will be Cllr D. Smith and Cllr T. Flower

## **039/2021 Public Participation Session**

The Chairman will invite questions and observations from members of the public present.

No questions from the public

## **040/2021 Essex County Councillors report**

### **Essex in top 10**

Essex County Council continues to be ranked in the Top 10 most effective top tier authorities in the country, as independently ranked by iMPower. Since 2018 we have been in the top ten in terms of productivity, demonstrating how we achieve better outcomes for residents from a less-than-average spend per head.

Over the last decade we have invested heavily in transformation for long-term sustainability and as a result we have been able to improve the quality of the services we provide, putting the resident, not institutions, at the heart of our services.

- 89% of our children now attend a school that is rated as Good or Outstanding
- We have improved our Adult Community Learning offer to nearly 11,000 students.
- We have an award-winning broadband team, enabling over 150,000 Essex homes and businesses to access superfast broadband.
- We engage 32,000 young people through our nationally recognised youth service.
- The condition of our roads is now among the best in the country.
- We have invested billions in improving and maintaining our infrastructure.

### **Council Tax**

This year, for the sixth time in the last ten years, we announced no increase in council tax, and only a 1.5% increase in our social care precept this year. Very few authorities across the country are in a position to act with this level of confidence. Most are increasing their rates by two or three times this amount.

In fact, since 2010, while inflation has increased by around 35%, the cumulative impact on council tax has been much less, at around 22%.

### **Climate Commission**

The Essex Climate Action Commission is looking to get the views of Essex residents on a selection of the recommendations the Commission will make which will help Essex become a net-zero county by 2050.

Since its inception in May 2020, the Commission has been developing recommendations for ways in which Essex can tackle climate change.

Through the Commission's [consultation](#), launched on 16 March, it hopes to find out how much public support there is for its recommendations, whether residents think the focus is on the right areas, and if the recommendations have the right level of ambition. Residents have until 27 April to have their say.



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## Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme works underway

The first energy efficient home upgrades under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme have been completed.

John Davies of Clacton has had external wall insulation which has raised his Energy Performance Certificate from E to D.

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme is a government-funded initiative which is being managed by Essex County Council in conjunction with seven city, district and borough councils. The purpose of the scheme is to install energy efficiency measures in Essex homes which help to reduce heating bills and cut carbon emissions.

Residents can follow Mr Davies' lead by [visiting the Essex County Council website](#) to find out more about the scheme and how they could also make potential savings to energy bills. To be eligible for up to £10,000 funding residents must own a home in Essex with an EPC rating of E, F or G, and have a household income below £30,000.

Funding is also available for private landlords, local authority-owned properties and social housing, however a 33% contribution from the landlord is required and the maximum funding per property is £5,000.

### COVID-19

- 1) It is a tribute to the residents of Essex that we have gone from having some of the highest case rates in the country to among the lowest.
- 2) As we move from lockdown, the need for testing becomes more important. As a result, we have created possibly the most extensive self-testing availability in the country, using libraries as collection points.
- 3) We had concerns about the clarity and effectiveness of Essex's payment scheme for people who have to stop work to self-isolate. Therefore, this has now been standardised and re-launched.
- 4) Care homes have again experienced an extremely tough time over the last few months. We are pleased to see care home visiting resuming, and we are working to ensure quality and capacity in all parts of the county.
- 5) Essex County Council have played a critical role in supporting the NHS vaccination programme by recruiting volunteers to help at sites and assisting with communication via our channels.

### ECC Budget

At Full Council on 23 February we approved our budget for the next year. We also announced some additional initiatives

- An additional £2million investment in economic development to ensure a successful reopening of the Essex economy.
- £1.5million to support the Educational Recovery Task Force which will lead and oversee the educational recovery of all Essex children.
- A further £1million investment in mental health support for children and our health and care workforce.
- A further £1million community action fund for environmental initiatives to help communities create less waste, travel sustainably, use renewable energy and produce less carbon.
- A further £500,000 to break the cycle of violence and protect young people from gangs.
- A further £7.2million of capital funding for Local Highways Panels (LHP) - £200K more for each panel, each year, for the next three years.
- An additional £180,000 added to LHP revenue budgets for smaller highways projects.

Minutes of the Parish Council AGM and Full Council meetings held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>. May 2021

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## Major Capital programmes

In March we agree the unlocking of grant funding worth over £200 million for Chelmsford North East By-pass and a new rail station at Beaulieu Park.

In total 14,109 new homes will be built through these two projects. By securing the funding, ECC has delivered an Infrastructure First approach whereby the infrastructure schemes will be brought forward earlier than would otherwise have been the case and existing residents will see the benefit as early as possible.

This funding is in addition to the £99m secured by ECC to support a new Link Road and Rapid Transport System to the east of Colchester. The Chelmsford and Colchester funds combine to over £300m, which will help drive economic recovery from Covid-19 by supporting thousands of construction jobs in Essex and adding 10bn to the economy.

## Freeports

Felixstowe/Harwich and the Thames Freeport proposals have been chosen by the Chancellor as two of the 8 new Freeports in the UK. This will be a huge boost to the wider North and South Essex economies, and the county and country as a whole. Again, Essex County Council's work supporting and influencing these outcomes has paid off.

Essex and the East of England will play a leading role in powering local and national economic growth. We can drive the regional recovery from the challenges of Covid-19 – while helping lead the rest of the nation down the path of increased prosperity.

## Outstanding Childrens Services

We have one of the best children and families services in the country, with some of the lowest spend, rated by Ofsted as outstanding. We did this by investing heavily in the right leadership, early intervention, and innovation in practice.

## Education Recovery and Young People

### Laptop Scheme

Last Summer, we launched an initiative called "Closing the Digital Divide" which provides laptops to young people who need devices. Clearly, with the advent of home schooling and remote learning, this has become a very prominent issue.

As part of our response to the COVID 19 pandemic, Essex focused its efforts on supporting young people to gain access to ensure they could continue with their education. The "Closing the Digital Divide" scheme involves ECC working with partners to donate redundant devices to the scheme, which are then refurbished and sold to fund the purchase of new chrome books for school children who require them. The initial focus was on providing the equipment to colleges for students in need and was later expanded to include Secondary and Primary Schools. In total we distributed in the region of 5,000 laptops (1,000 of which were purchased by ECC) and continue with the scheme. As we emerge from the COVID 19 crisis, we will once again be taking donations of devices from the wider population and business as we further expand the scheme.

The next phase of the programme will see us extend support for larger families. Even with the schools now back, access at home is crucial for young people's education.

### Easter Holiday Camps

Essex ActivAte is the new holiday activity and food programme run by Active Essex in partnership with Essex County Council and funded by the Department for Education. Working with a network of holiday club delivery partners the programme provided FREE face to face clubs for young people who are eligible for benefits based free school meals, as well as young people from working families who would benefit from this extra support. Clubs included fun activities, including sports and arts & crafts, for at least 4 hours per day over 8 days of the Easter holidays.

In total over Easter we have provided 22,125 spaces over 8 days. This includes 20,845 spaces on the Essex ActivAte programme, 1176 SEND specialist spaces, and 640 spaces on mental wellbeing hubs. Within that offer we have provided around 420 spaces per day for working families - over the 8 days that is 3360 spaces available.





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## 041/2021 District Councillors report – BDC Cllr W. Scattergood

No report was given

## 042/2021 Representative reports

- Highways maintenance – Cllr D. Smith & Cllr P. Collett

**Highways** - Improvement works to Sudbury Rd are at last nearing completion. What was originally a ten-week work programme will have taken in excess of four months. Hopefully, we will not experience any further flooding problems.

**Flooding at Audley End** – Cllr P. Collett and Cllr D. Smith had a site meeting with Lucy Shepherd, the Lead Local Flood Authority Manager. She is in discussion with the adjoining landowner regarding remedial works, although from her comments she would appear to be reliant on their cooperation. She would also like Parish Councils to become proactive in getting landowners to carry out ditch maintenance works.

Proposed SID for Audley End - The Parish Council and Highways have come to an agreement regarding the height and the type of SID to be installed. A site meeting to establish a location for the VAS was held with Rissa Long from Highways on 16th April 2021. A site on the eastern verge, opposite the Audley End hardstanding was proposed by Highways who stated that, due to the location of services etc. in the western verge, this was the only practicable site. The proposed site was subsequently put to councillors, the general consensus being that we should accept Highway's proposal as it was better than nothing. The PC's decision was communicated to Highways. I am told by Rissa Long that she is waiting final confirmation of the location of nearby underground services and if this is satisfactory it is her intention to seek funding for the VAS at the June Highways Panel meeting. SID Sudbury Road - This unit continues to work but smile inappropriately. The unit will twist around in high winds and stop working as it is then not correctly aligned. A method of preventing it twisting should be investigated. Community Speed Watch - As previously reported Gestingthorpe has been put on the list of speed watch groups that will be formed in the future, unfortunately due to the pandemic no groups are being formed at the moment. We have however been promised online training and we have now 10 volunteers who would be interested in taking part. However, I have received no recent communications from the Speed Watch organisers. I will continue to chase.

ECC Cllr P. Schwier joined the meeting

Cllr P. Schwier introduced himself and stated what he can do for Gestingthorpe

- Playing Field/Recreation Ground – Cllr A. Cooper
  - 1) Update on Play Equipment repair – Cllr P. Collett

Play Equipment - The works to repair the play equipment commenced in March 2021, during the course of the works various councillors noted the poor standard of painting to the swings etc. This was communicated to the contractor who then repainted the works to a more acceptable standard. As the repair works progressed further items of unsatisfactory workmanship were noted. i.e. areas of stain missing, excessive gaps in the safety tiles, incorrect fixings and timber edging not fixed down correctly. These problems were communicated to the contractor who carried out some resin filling to some of the wider gaps in the safety tiles. The PC then suggested that we should meet with the contractor on site in order that any outstanding problems could be discussed and the way forward agreed. Despite the PC making this suggestion on several occasions the contractor refused to meet the PC. On the 19th April the contractor issued an invoice for the works he had carried out asking for it to be paid "as soon as possible". On 26th April the contractor stated that if he was not paid by 30th April he would sell the 2 rocker units that he had contracted to provide and fix to another party. The PC issued further invitations to the contractor to attend a site meeting but these were declined therefore on 9th May the PC carried out a further inspection and issued a snagging list to the contractor. On 12th May the PC received an emailed letter threatening legal action if the contractor's invoice was not paid by 21st May 2021.



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**RESOLVED:** Cllr D. Smith proposed to pay the outstanding invoice in full but to accompany the payment with a letter to complete the “snagging list” and install the agreed two rocker swings. Cllr A. Cooper seconded. **All Agreed**

- Broadband update– Cllr S. Bolter & Cllr P. Collett

From mid-January onwards Fibre installations accelerated, with many underground and fibre connections being completed by the end of the month. Problems caused were several to take much longer.

**Underground Problems.** As predicted making each installation in sections, led to fibre threading problems and the need to reopen completed trenches. There was multiple trenching to neighbouring houses, which could have been done together.

**Overhead Problems.** Despite residents expressing concern in advance, some installations could not be made because tree pruning had not been done. Installations in some places had to await new a road closure.

**Communication Problems.** Home visits had to be minimised because of Covid. Much more information could have been given in advance to help people to be ready to agree their final router installation arrangements. For example --- how to decide between a phone adapter or voce over internet phones using the router signal --- that fibre comes pre-terminated in multiple of 5 metres, perhaps meaning a choice of the connection being a bit short or having to accommodate a coil of spare cable --- and for overhead people, the knowledge that the connection had to be taken down to ground level before entering, ruling out planning runs through the loft.

**Complete?** Anyone who committed to take up County Broadband Fibre, before detailed design was done is summer 2020, should now be connected unless they were in the few outlying areas of the Parish that are included in another village’s rollout. Anyone not yet satisfactorily connected is invited to contact me. My e-address is on the PC website (and the folder it sends too is now visible).

**Other issues.** Some people suffering extra problem have been given higher speeds (they might not need) for no extra cost. Some may have preferred a price reduction on their original agreement, especial now CBL are offering new customers economy deals on low speeds.

*(continued)*

Now the ground has settled, the drought is over, and the grass is growing we need to check the reinstatement of Church Green.

I leave David to report on the legal issues of the wayleave for going under the Green.

Anyone selling property in Gestingthorpe should mention County Broadband Ltd, as entering a Gestingthorpe post code into Broadband suppliers recommended by Which? (or similar sites) gives the impression that only very slow rates are available here. I have complained to Which? that it does not mention that there are other suppliers specialising in rural areas, and that its surveys do not allow “Other” suppliers to be named, so they will never get enough statistics to rate them.

## Public Transport

The F315 flexible bus service should be back to normal after the major disruptions of the last 4 months, but how long will that “normal” will last is unknown. As Covid restrictions reduce, so will special pandemic bus subsidies.

It will be a case of “Use it or Lose it”.

The maximum subsidy Essex pays to bus operators is dependent on the number of journeys made. All passengers count, whether the journeys are paid-for or covered by a free pass.

My campaigning has got the F315 onto the Halstead bus departure screens, but efforts to get Earliest Departure times (instead of nominal median times with vague notes few people notice) on the official database used by Google and other phone apps has still had no result. We still have internet users turning up at the bus stop 5 or 10 minutes after the bus has departed.

The proper earliest departure time timetable with colour coding booking rules has been removed from the PC website, as has much other useful local information. (the B&W table from Parish News is without notes)

I propose that the colour timetable is reinstated immediately. Failure to provide accurate information



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about the service reduces its use and increases the likely that the bus is withdrawn. Use it now, or it may not be there when you need it later!!

- Footpath – Leslie Crumpton-Taylor

No complaints for any Gestingthorpe footpaths

- Tree Warden – Cllr T. Flower

Cllr T. Flower produced an invoice from Graham Nicholl Tree Surgery for £200.00p. This invoice was agreed to be paid. Various trees to be purchased in memory of those who have suffered of COVID-19

- Village Hall – Cllr C. Craig

With continuing relaxation of the Covid-19 lockdown rules, the village hall committee is hoping to be able to open the hall up for bookings once more. An in-person AGM is currently scheduled for 1st July, to be followed on the same evening by a committee meeting.

It is proposed to restart the coffee mornings after the Village Picnic event. The first coffee morning is proposed for 9th July, and we hope this will be well attended and allow villagers to reconnect.

Although I had originally pencilled in 26th June for the Village Picnic Event, we have discovered that Sudbury Cricket Club are scheduled to play a match on the playing fields on this day. I therefore have proposed to move the event on a day to Sunday 27th June. Although Gestingthorpe Cricket Club have an away match that day, we hope that the majority of villagers will be able to attend. We have asked if it is possible to allow use of the village hall toilets on the day. The new date will be advertised in the Parish News and online.

## 043/2021 Planning Applications

**Planning - Pot Kiln Lodge.** The saga continues. Cllr D. Smith was advised that BDC Officers visited the site on 23rd April last, and handed a formal letter to the occupiers setting out requirements to cease the residential use/occupation. The occupiers have been given five weeks to respond, which takes us to the end of May, before any further action will be considered/taken by BDC. Bearing in mind the sites planning history, he feels that to date we have been very badly let down by BDC. Enforcement procedures are an integral and essential part of an effective and enforceable planning policy.

### 21/00601/FUL - Clickett Lodge Church Street Gestingthorpe CO9 3AX

Construction of cartlodge, store and stable

**RESOLVED:** Plans submitted do not conform to Validation requirements.

Objection to the proposed siting on the grounds that it's on the boundary with the garden of the adjoining residential property and there is potential for nuisance from lighting, noise and smell which could be detrimental to the neighbouring residential properties.

The application is silent on waste management (question 7) ie storage and disposal of muck from the stable.

### 21/00911/HH & 21/00912/LBC - Byroad Cottage Potkiln Chase Gestingthorpe CO9 3BH

Proposed single storey rear extension and cartlodge with home office.

**RESOLVED:** No objection to proposed extension.

Objection to proposed Cartlodge on grounds of over development and out of keeping with the overall scale of property. The current application, as was application [15/00114/FUL](#), is silent on the use/occupation of the existing double garage with office/accommodation over.

Question 2 on the Biodiversity Validation Checklist has not been completed. The property is pre 1914 and within 400m of woodland.

### 21/01194/TPO - Pot Kilns Potkiln Chase Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3BH

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order 6/84 - Carry out works to Pines as detailed in the application

**RESOLVED:** Support, trees are dangerous and should be felled as soon as possible.



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**21/00965/FUL & 21/00966/LBC** - Crouch House Moat Street Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AU  
Change of roof finish of agricultural barn and garage to a natural slate tiled roof with red clay ridge and hip tiles, and Falzinc (aluminium sheet with zinc surface), to shallow roofed lean-to on west elevation.  
**RESOLVED:** No objection.

**21/00747/FUL** - Hill Farm Sudbury Road Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3BL  
Extension to existing grain store and erection of lean to for fan house.  
**RESOLVED:** No objection, subject to the proposal not affecting public footpath running through farmyard.

**21/01378/LBC** - Seven Sisters Cottage Moat Street Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AT  
Renewal of external lime plaster.  
**RESOLVED: No objection**

**21/01414/FUL** - Nether Hall Farm Nether Hill Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3BD  
Single storey side extension to provide additional workshop space and office.  
**RESOLVED: No objection**

**044/2021 Decision/s made by BDC on planning applications**  
No planning decisions have been made by BDC affecting GPC

## **045/2021 Finance**

1) Bank balances as at 30<sup>th</sup>. April 2021 and 2021/22 budget account  
Councillors noted the Bank balances as at 30<sup>th</sup>. April 2021 and 2021/22 budget account

2) To receive and agree the 2021/22 Insurance premium of £529.60p  
Cllr D. Smith proposed accepting the Insurance premium of £529.60p for 2021/22. Cllr P. Collett seconded. **All Agreed**

3) Councillors to agree payments of April & May 2021  
Cllr D. Smith proposed authorising the April and May 2021 payments. Cllr A. Cooper seconded.  
**All Agreed**

4) To receive the 2020/21 signed Internal Audit Report  
Councillors noted the Internal Audit Report. The Chairman and RFO thanked Leslie Crumpton-Taylor for undertaking the Internal Audit for 2020/21

5) To receive and sign the Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2020/21 part 2  
Cllr D. Smith proposed that the Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2020/21 part 2 be signed. Cllr T. Flower seconded. **All Agreed**

6) To receive and sign the Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2020/21  
Cllr D. Smith proposed that the Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 be signed. Cllr T. Flower seconded. **All Agreed**

7) To receive and sign the Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2020/21  
Cllr D. Smith proposed that the Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2020/21 be signed. Cllr T. Flower seconded. **All Agreed**

**Date of next meetings all to be held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm: 08.07.21: 09.09.21: 11.11.21**

## **046/2021 Items for Next Agenda**

Grants and Donations (Finance)  
Cllr C. Craig sends her apologies for the July meeting





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## **047/2021      Closure of the Meeting**

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25pm

Signed

8<sup>th</sup>. July 2021

**D. Smith**