



# 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 meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>. July 2020 at 7.30pm in the village hall.

Present: Cllrs J. Nott (Chairman), A. Cooper, D. Smith, C. Craig, S. Bolter, ECC D. Finch and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). Also present were 2 members of the public

**017/2020 Chairman Welcome.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that Social Distancing will be maintained throughout the meeting

**018/2020 Apologies for Absence** were received from Cllrs T. Flower, P. Collett and BDC Cllr W. Scattergood

**019/2020 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 the Cricket club

**020/2020 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Gestingthorpe Parish Council**

To receive and agree the minutes of the Emergency GPC meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup>. March 2020.

**All Agreed**

**021/2020 Public Participation Session**

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

No questions were asked by the public

**022/2020 Essex County Councillors report – Cllr David Finch**

Action taken to date:

**Shielding:**

Within 48 hours we set up a distribution and call centre in Essex. Local government staff and thousands of the volunteers who signed up via the newly created Essex Welfare Service were the first authority to begin reaching out to and supporting people in Category B. As of today, 5444 residents have been supported by EWS and 978 Emergency Food Deliveries have been made.

**Howe Green:**

One of our central priorities as part of the response to the crisis has been to move older people out of hospital settings as quickly and as safely as possible for their safety and for the effective operation of hospitals across Essex.

Thanks to funding from MHCLG, within a period of just two weeks we have created a new 76 bed facility in Essex as step down care. That facility has started admissions this weekend.

**Securing PPE using our strategic partners:**

Thanks to a strong, 30-year relationship with colleagues from Jiangsu Province in China, we were able to secure 200,000 protective face masks to support critical need across the social care sector in Essex and neighbouring counties.

We have also been dealing with various companies in the UK who have contacted us about providing supplies of PPE.

**Infection control in care homes:**

We moved quickly in terms of our approach to managing infection in care homes, in readiness for government's change in approach towards tracing and containing spread of the virus, going above and beyond PHE guidance.

The county council, with the NHS and Public Health England (PHE), have stepped up prevention and outbreak management and now cases seem to be declining. We know and are aware of best practice in prevention and stopping outbreaks and are ensuring that care homes can do this - including PPE, reduced staff rotation and minimising visitors.

We have developed local hubs across Essex to ensure strong regular links with care homes.



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Essex undertook a national pilot with PHE on testing all staff and residents in care homes with few or no cases. Lessons around how to deal with staff who are positive but have no symptoms have proved important. Now a national testing portal has been set up and all care homes can access this for testing. The council is supporting this by working through the local hubs to ensure the right people tested at the right time and the appropriate action is taken.

## **Coronavirus Community Facebook Page:**

For a number of years, we have been at the forefront of community mobilisation via Facebook. Very early in the outbreak of coronavirus in Essex we activated our network of Facebook Community Group administrators and set up Essex Coronavirus Action, a page that has 36,000 people following it and posts viewed millions of times. Through this page, we've recruited thousands of volunteers for the newly created Essex Welfare Service and shared vital public health messages through our network of other community groups. Our work has been recognised by Facebook who are using it as a case study of good practice.

## **Care Technology:**

This is a difficult and challenging time for the care sector. With vulnerable older people shielding, a depleted care workforce and limited PPE we have been forced to innovate to ensure our service users are receiving the care they need.

Alongside moving our equipment contract to 7 days a week we extended our Care Technology pilot across the whole county. This includes installing digital technology that allows care workers to 'visit' up to 2,000 service users remotely, rather than requiring a physical visit. It is of significant benefit to us during lockdown, helping us to safeguard the vulnerable even further.

## **Country Parks and Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC):**

Essex County Council made the decision to close their Country Parks to help limit the spread of coronavirus and with the health and safety of our visitors and staff in mind. This difficult decision followed national guidance around gatherings and social distancing and was put into place after unfortunate scenes of overcrowding in our car parks, and large groups in our open spaces were unable to maintain social distancing.

Local residents can however still access nearby Essex Country Parks via public rights of way.

All Essex Recycling Centres were closed on Monday 23 March until further notice. The decision was made in response to strict government guidelines urging people to stay in their homes to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. There were issues around social distancing at the sites to ensure the safety of both staff and residents as well as the government advice to avoid unnecessary journeys.

## **Schools and Adult Community Learning (ACL):**

Since the start of the crisis schools have remained open to the children of key workers and to vulnerable children.

The figures from Essex schools as of Monday 4 May were:

- Number of schools open: 455
- Number of students attending school: 3,729
- Essex's total school population age 5-18: 214,488
- Percentage of pupils attending school: 1.7%

In terms of schools that are open this varies from day to day. Some are open every day, others not at all, whereas some are opening a few times a week.

ACL the County Council's in-house adult education service usually delivers courses in its nine Centres, as well as in different out-centres at the heart of the communities. Due to the impact of COVID-19, ACL has been making sure that there is as little interruption to learning as possible. It has successfully moved swiftly in transferring its classroom offer to online, where appropriate. It has not currently been possible to move certain more practical based courses online so ACL tutors are engaging in other activities, such as producing video clips, blogs and articles to keep people engaged and motivated. Tutors are also keeping in contact with learners using social media and emails. These innovative approaches also importantly extend to learners on Supported Learning programmes, with learners on accredited programmes still being supported by their tutor where appropriate with regular phone calls and contact, and many engaging well with online learning.

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>. July 2020

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



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## Budget:

As you might imagine the current situation is making demands on the ECC budget. To date, we have incurred the following additional costs:

PPE	£2m
Residential care	£18.6m
Domiciliary care –	£11.4m
Emergency mortuary facility	£10m
Home adaptations	£1.2m
Payment for increased costs for residential and domiciliary care due to Covid 19 (i.e. buying PPE)	£7m

## Recovery:

On Monday, following the statement from the Prime Minister, government guidance was released about the steps towards easing lockdown. We are working on the implications of this for our services and will provide you with news on that soon.

## Other news:

The first meeting of the Essex Climate Action Commission took place virtually on 12 May, when it was agreed that there was an urgency to proceed at pace and to be bold in tackling the climate challenge. The Commission discussed the opportunity to build on the gains that have emerged as a result of Covid 19 – how the public are engaging more with the natural world, walking and cycling more (greener forms of transport) and more people are working from home, including in jobs where this hadn't been thought possible.

They also discussed the challenges arising from Covid-19 – single use plastics making a reappearance, the carrier bag being used more, and the number of home deliveries being made. The commission recognised the important of public safety while balancing the need for responsible purchasing and not losing the momentum that has been made in the fight against plastic and waste.

The Commission will consider six pillars of work, looking at how ambitious, positive solutions and behaviour change can impact on the carbon output of the following:

- Green Infrastructure
- Adapting to a changing climate
- Transport
- Built Environment
- Energy and Waste
- Community Action

The Commission also considered how planned new developments across Essex should be used to test and pilot new ways of working, particularly around waste and transport. Transport was considered to be one of the biggest challenges, but also where some of the biggest gains could be made.

The Commission will next meet in July with a proposed interim report on recommendations to the council being produced for October.

## Essex Housing:

Essex Housing have announced that Air Sourced Heat Pumps (ASHPs) will be installed as part of all new developments.

An ASHP is a system that transfers heat from outside to inside a building, or vice versa. In domestic heating use, an ASHP absorbs heat from outside air and releases it inside the building, as hot air, hot water-filled radiators, underfloor heating and/or domestic hot water supply. The same system can often do the reverse in summer, cooling the inside of the house. When correctly specified, an ASHP can offer a full central heating solution and domestic hot water up to 80 °C.

Cllr. D. Finch then took questions from Councillors and residents

Cllr. D. Finch then left the meeting



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**023/2020 District Councillors report.** No report was given

**024/2020 Representative reports**

- Highways maintenance – Cllr D. Smith

Works to Sudbury Road have started but electricity cables were not noticed so hence they have been suspended. Works was to start in June '20 but due to COVID-19 it is now expected to start on 18.01.21 The New speed sign erection has been moved to the next financial year

- Playing Field/Recreation Ground – Cllr A. Cooper

Graham Nicolls to fell the dangerous branch. Nails protruding from the rubber mats which have now been removed. There is a small risk of injury. This situation is now in hand and a site visit 26<sup>th</sup>. July at 10am.

- ROSPA report 2020 (previously circulated to Councillors)

From the report there is a small risk of injury. This situation is now in hand and a site visit on 26<sup>th</sup>. July at 10am has been arranged.

- Broadband update– Cllr S. Bolter

Due to extensive work from Cllr S. Bolter and GPC Councillors it has been decided to let CBB undertake the works as per their proposals. GPC to write to CBB asking them to minimise any road closure in the village.

- Footpath – Leslie Crumpton-Taylor

Minor footpath issues have been resolved. Footpath from Audley End is now clear. Footpath 67 (by Ellis Farm) was in a terrible condition. This situation has now been resolved and left passable.

- Tree Warden – Cllr T. Flower. No report was given

- Village Hall – Chris Harman informed the meeting that

The COVID-19 pandemic meant we had to close the village hall during March and cancel the regular bookings and hire of the hall by third parties for social activities such as Pilates, keep fit, music practice, handbell ringing and postpone other bookings such as the fortnightly coffee mornings, a Tuesday Talk, a wedding reception, and a wine tasting evening.

The AGM that was due to be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June was postponed and I hope will be held during October or November.

Our income from hire of the hall and fundraising ceased immediately yet expenses continued. We received a donation from a kind resident and that will be used to improve the facilities of our village hall.

After a few weeks of the hall being unused we decided to undertake some refurbishment. The kitchen was redecorated by volunteers using donated materials and the front and rear gardens tidied up also by our kind volunteers who will also soon replace some guttering.

The funds of the village hall were greatly improved by the receipt of a Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant. On behalf of the village hall committee I wish to thank both David Smith and the Rural Community Council of Essex of bringing to our attention the potential of the village hall benefitting from the Governments Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant. We applied and were successful in receiving, through BDC, a Grant.

We decided to immediately use part of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant to have the two halls and the outside windows painted and, as you can readily see, that work is nearing completion. We try to use local tradespeople and the painter, who has done the excellent job you can see, is from Castle Hedingham.

We will be installing, hopefully during this calendar year, sound reduction panels in both halls. They will improve the acoustics of the two halls to the benefit of people using them.

We hope to be opening the village hall during September but that is to be a committee decision yet to be made. We have to observe the COVID-19 rules and guidance for the reopening of village halls and



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community halls and that will entail us drawing up appropriate rules for us as the Trustees of the village hall and its hirers and users to make sure that appropriate rules, guidelines, risk assessments, cleaning and sanitising etc. etc. are in place for the safe use of this lovely village hall. The hardworking village hall committee has risen to challenges before and I know they will rise to the one of COVID-19.

- Preventing Travellers in the village/area – Cllr J. Nott

Massive scare a month ago when Travellers pulled into Colne Valley Railway but fortunately, they moved away from the area. The Chairman has spoken to the landowner of the playing field to find a way of protecting the area. Wooden bollards around the field was approved by the landowner. A cost of supplying bollards and fixing them into place is to be sought.

**025/2020 Planning Applications.** All planning applications responses from GPC have been submitted to BDC

**026/2020 Decision/s made by BDC on planning applications.** Decisions by BDC have been circulated to Councillors

## **027/2020 Finance**

1) Bank balances as at 30<sup>th</sup>. June 2020 and 2020/21 budget account (previously circulated to Councillors). Councillors noted the Bank balances as at 30<sup>th</sup>. June 2020 and 2020/21 budget account

2) Councillors to agree payment of June and July 2020 finances (previously circulated to Councillors). **All Agreed**

3) To Receive the Internal Auditors report for 2019/20. Councillors noted the report

4) To Complete and, if agreed, sign the Certificate of Exemption.

Cllr A. Cooper proposed and Cllr C. Craig seconded to approve the Certificate of Exemption. **All Agreed.** This was then signed by the Chairman and RFO

5) To Complete and, if agreed, sign Section 1 Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2019/20. Cllr D. Smith proposed and Cllr S. Bolter seconded to approve Section 1 Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2019/20. **All Agreed.** This was then signed by the Chairman and Parish Clerk.

6) To Complete and, if agreed, sign Section 2 – Accounting Statement of AGAR 2019/20.

Cllr A. Cooper proposed and Cllr D. Smith seconded to approve Section 2 – Accounting Statement of AGAR 2019/20. **All Agreed.** This was then signed by the Chairman and RFO

7) Internet Banking – Councillors to approve the use of Internet Banking for GPC (Policy previously circulated to Councillors). Councillors agreed to changing the banking arrangements from Lloyds Bank to Unity Trust Bank ASAP. 5 Councillors agreed to be cheque signatories – Cllrs J. Nott, D. Smith, P. Collett, A. Cooper and in his absence T. Flower

## **028/2020 Items for Next Agenda**

Wooden bollards around the field: Oates Cottage: New Chairman: ROSPA Report: Pavilion

**Date of next meetings:** 10.09.20 subject to the village hall opening following the COVID-19 crisis and health & safety checks: 12.11.20 Budget / Precept meeting

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

10<sup>th</sup>. September 2020

**James Nott**