

GESTINGTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk / RFO: Kevin B. Money
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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 9th. January 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs D. Smith (Chair), P. Bagby, P. Collett, A. Cooper, K. Brazier, ECC Cllr P. Schwier and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were 2 members of the public present.

001/2025 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr D. Green and G. Carey

002/2025 Declaration of Interest

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Pecuniary or non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda
None Declared

003/2025 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Gestingthorpe Parish Council

To receive and agree the minutes of the GPC meeting held on 14th. November 2024. **All Agreed**

004/2025 Chairman's report and any update since last meeting

Best wishes for a peaceful and healthy New Year.

On Monday 11th November last, I laid the Parish Councils wreath on our Village War Memorial in memory of those from the Parish who made the ultimate sacrifice and all who served their Country. I was extremely pleased at the turnout and perhaps we can build on this in the future.

As in previous years, the contact for our wreath is Loraine Abbey who is the Treasurer and Poppy Appeal Organiser for the Heddingham's and District Branch of the British Legion. The Branch is 100 years old and on 2nd December last, I represented the Parish Council at their Centenary Evening at The Castle Club in Castle Heddingham.

We seem to have missed the worst of the current bout of bad weather, although the recent snow fall and heavy rain has again highlighted the ongoing issues of blocked gullies and drains in Church Street. I fear that unless ECC Highways make a concerted effort to rectify matters, the flooding problem can only get worse.

005/2025 Public Participation Session

A resident spoke about lifting the canopies on Church Street recreation ground. Gully adjacent to the pond is still blocked. Various flooding issue in Gestingthorpe and a very large pothole has appeared. This has been reported to ECC Cllr P. Schwier. Gullies are on a regular schedule but ECC Highways engineer has visited Gestingthorpe but the repair lorry was not equipped well enough to undertake all the blocked gullies in Gestingthorpe.

An unlawful breach of a covenant over makeshift dwellings being erected. An enforcement issue may occur if the building is being lived in.

A resident spoke about further flooding and drainage in North End Road due to flash water. He also raised concerns over light pollution from Tucklands

006/2025 VE Day - 8th May 2025 is the 80th anniversary – Councillors to discuss any events for the day

- On VE day all events will be taking place – Village Hall drinks – BBQ – Lighting of Beacon at 9.30pm
- Following day – Coffee morning theme
- Combined VH and PC event

007/2025 Essex County Councillor report – ECC Cllr Peter Schwier

ECC holding a meeting on 10th. January 2025 on Local Government Reform and Devolution with ECC taking the lead in the new process.

Councillors have received all information since the last meeting

- Last chance to book free maths courses in Essex
- Love Essex fund returns for 2015 for projects that reduce household
- Essex travel service extends price cap in line with government announcement
- Rural Countryside Funding grants
- Sustainable travel on the rise as Essex heads into 2025
- Reminder Primary School Places 15th Jan 25
- ECC still looking at the 2025-2026 budget

008/2025 District Councillor report – BDC Cllr David Holland. No report was given

009/2025 Mobile Phone mast update – Cllr D. Smith

As discussed between the Parish Council and O2, this proposed site was part of the Shared Rural Network (SRN) project. This English part of this project has now been completed. Proposed sites that were not built have been reassessed and unfortunately some of those sites will not be developed. I understand this is very frustrating for people who were looking forward to improved network coverage locally.

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Thank you for your email of today's date and I must raise the following:-

1. If the site was part of the SRN project and it has not been built, how can the project be completed?
2. Sites that were not built have been reassessed and do I assume that we fall within those sites that will not be developed? If so, what was the criteria adopted and why was this site rejected?

As you will be aware, phone masts are a very emotive issue in rural communities such as ours and the saga over this mast has caused a considerable amount of anguish for the Parish Council and has divided family and friends.

On this basis alone, I suggest that we are entitled to a better explanation of why the mast is not proceeding.

The mast was being used by O2 who withdrew the application. Vodafone is looking into possibly having a mast

010/2025 s106 monies – update from the Clerk

BDC officer thanked the Clerk for confirming the date the works are to be undertaken.

As this is a re-imbursement payment to the Parish Council, the Parish will need to pay the invoice first and submit the paid invoice to BDC.

If the Parish are not in funds to pay the invoice up front and need BDC to pay, please let me know.

011/2025 Planning Applications**24/02000/FUL - Tucklands North End Road Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3BW**

Erection of an indoor riding arena in relation to the existing equestrian facilities

The following response was sent to BDC before the planning deadline. It read:

Gestingthorpe Parish Council states that this is a major addition to the development - given that extension of garage, swimming pool etc that have been already approved. The approved buildings are not shown on the drawings.

Given the scale of development, we would have expected a full design and access statement with photos of existing and images/photo montages of the proposed building (when viewed from the main road etc) and how it relates to the existing house, stables and approved buildings etc.

From the information submitted, and without the benefit of the information requested above, we consider that the addition proposed is going to be visually intrusive and become an overdevelopment of what is a private residential property.

There is no landscaping plan although reference is made to planting of additional trees to satisfy bio diversity requirements

The materials are very basic - metal panelling - difficult to appreciate without visuals

The application refers to materials matching existing but no logic in selection given.

We look forward to receiving further information

24/02498/HH - South Pot Cottage Potkiln Chase Gestingthorpe CO9 3BH

Enlargement of existing garage, adding a new parking bay with annex above

For the reasons below, Gestingthorpe Parish Council are unable to support this proposal. The existing garage is of a scale and character appropriate to the scale and character of South Pot Cottage. The proposal is to increase the footprint of the existing garage by about 40% to provide a 2nd parking bay and a staircase to a first floor annex formed in the roof. The ridge height increasing by about 1.2m. This is a significant increase in size, resulting in a roof height, bulk and overall massing that would challenge, dominate and be detrimental to the setting and character of the Listed Building. This is compounded by the ground floor to the Cottage being lower than the garage floor. The proposal would also have a detrimental effect on views from the Village Playing Field, Church Street and Sudbury Road. However, should BDC be mindful to approve the application, then we request that consideration is given to the following:-

1. The proposed first floor window to the bathroom overlooks the adjoining property. This window should be omitted.
2. The drawings do not show any proposals to extend the existing entrance drive to facilitate vehicular access to the additional garage. Pot Kiln Chase is a very narrow lane and vehicular access to and from the property must be challenging at times. Bearing this in mind, we suggest a planning condition requiring the provision of a turning area in order that vehicles can enter and leave the site in a forward gear."
3. The annex is to be used and occupied solely in connection with the residential use of South Pot Cottage and shall not be sub let."

24/02499/LBC - South Pot Cottage Potkiln Chase Gestingthorpe CO9 3BH

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012/2025 Planning Decision/s**24/02050/ELD - Farm Buildings Opposite Parkgate Farm Delvyns Lane Gestingthorpe**

Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for an existing development - Confirmation of the implementation of planning permission 23/02726/VAR and listed building consent 20/02054/LBC. **“Application GRANTED”**

Update on planning applications

24/02000/FUL - Tucklands North End Road. Erection of an indoor riding arena in relation to the existing equestrian facilities. Decision pending

24/01619/FUL - [Retention of farm access and farmyard to existing crop storage building. - Land On The Right Hand Side North End Road Gestingthorpe Essex](#)

013/2025 Representative reports

- **Highways & SID** – Cllr P. Collett

Highways SID Sudbury Road - Despite their representations the Parish Council have been unable to obtain funding for the replacement device from either Braintree District Council or Essex County Council.

Potholes etc. - The Parish Council have continued to report potholes, damaged road signs and missing finger signs on the ECC Highways website. Despite a visit by Cllr Schwier no action has yet been taken by ECC.

Speeding - Speeding persists within the village at dangerous levels. The Parish Council will continue attempt to re-establish contact with the police to see if they are able to provide further assistance.

Speed Limit Reduction Northend Road - The Parish Council have put forward a proposal to Cllr Schwier that the existing speed limits within the village could be expanded and harmonised so the limits on Northend and Sudbury Roads could be extended and brought in line with those on Moat Street/Audley End. ECC Highways have commented on our proposals as follows: “Unfortunately, we cannot change speed limits without evidence to show that there is a speeding issue. The guidelines and speeds on roads are set by the Dft and we have to follow the Speed Management Strategy when looking at speeds. There is no collision data to show that the two locations are accident hotspots. The only way to tell if there is a speeding problem would be to carry out a speed survey in each of the locations of Sudbury Road and North End Road.” Unfortunately, neither ECC or the Parish Council currently have funds to carry out speed surveys.

- **Playing Field** – Cllr A. Cooper

I walked around the Playing Field on Monday morning. I felt that there was nothing extra to add to my November report which included the recurrent observations about overhanging branches and the wire fence along the eastern boundary etc.

- **Footpath** – Cllr P. Bagby. Nothing to report

- **Village Hall** – Cllr P. Bagby

The Village Hall had a very active & successful Christmas period. Despite the miserable weather, 23 children from both Gestingthorpe & Bulmer attended the party on 7th. December. Santa popped in and handed out presents to all the children as well as the elf helpers. Everyone had a lovely time although the elves were somewhat weary at the end of the party.

The adult's party was held the following Friday and all tickets were sold prior to the evening. The VH served a lovely hot supper and entertainment provided by local resident Suzanne David. The event was very successful and raised over £600.

The first coffee morning of 2025 will be held on 17th. January and the first Gestingthorpe Grill on Saturday 22nd.

February. The next fundraising event is our annual quiz on 7th. March.
 As at 31 December total funds held in cash and in the bank was £8,086.69
 The next Management Committee meeting is 13th February 2025.

- **Defibrillator update** - Cllr P. Bagby

Defibrillator Report

Description	Amount	
Managed Support - Annual Provision	-126.00	4 years @ £504 next payable May 2026
VETS Scheme	-60.00	Due Oct 25
Emergency Phone	-100.00	Due June 25
Total	-286.00	
 NatWest	 275.22	
CHT	516.00	

7 people currently on the Volunteer telephone system & defib checking rota.

Training

Training is run as a Defibrillator 'Awareness' Session. Each session runs for 2 hours and costs £175. The session gives an overview of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA), 999 – What questions to expect and a practical demonstration of CPR, using the AED, handover to paramedics.

2nd Defibrillator Costs

Purchase of Defibrillator: To powered site: £1900: Installation: Estimate £250

To unpowered site: £2340: Thermal Bag: £55.00

Pricing exclusive of 20% VAT. VAT is not payable if purchased under a Managed Solution.

Managed Solution

One off fee for Public Liability & Damage cover: £100 - Optional one-off fee for theft & malicious damage cover: £250 - No further/ongoing insurance costs - Webnos Governance System (RRP £150)

Post event counselling (RRP £300) - AED signage/personal safety kit - 1st year VETS

For a Managed Solution a weekly equipment check required as per current defib.

- **ROSPA 2024 play inspection report** – Cllr P. Collett

Play Equipment As previously reported the annual ROSPA inspection of the play equipment has been carried out. A few minor items were noted as needing attention, but generally the equipment is safe. Quotes are to be sought for the repairs indicated in the report.

- **Wish list for the future** - Pavilion upgrading. SID. Relining posts at the access to the pavilion. New Defibrillator

- **Pavilion** – Cllr D. Green

Since the last meeting, the shower block in the home changing area has been re tiled by Dan SMITH.

The electrical work that we have the S106 monies for is to commence on the 13th. January 2025, with MW Electrical. There is also a fluorescent light bulb that needs to be replaced as this was broken by the football team.

I will ask Roger SMITH if he is available to let the electrician into the premises as I will be away on holiday.

Cricket Club.

I have been in conversation with Chris MOULTON regarding the proposed changes to the cricket clubs use of the pavilion. It has been verbally agreed that as from the start of next season, the club will pay a donation to the parish of £40.00 per home match. The Parish will also take on the responsibility of paying for the electric costs.

The club will have some changes to it next season, John Butcher is to stand down as Chairperson. No one has yet been put forward to replace him.

The club want to continue to have the BBQs after home matches and are also looking into the possibility of offering tea/coffee and cake on a Sunday morning, when the pitch is being prepared. This would also help raise funds and awareness of the club. I have discussed that they need to look at advertising this in the Parish magazine.

There is also the matter of the club sub-letting the ground and facilities to Sudbury cricket club.

I feel this needs to be discussed in more detail, how the parish thinks this should move forward for next

season.

- Do we let it continue as is, or do the parish look to receive the funds as a hire charge?
- If this was to happen, Gestingthorpe, would lose this revenue.
- How would this impact on the current running costs of the club?

The hole outside also needs to be addressed before the next season, as could prove to be a health and safety matter. Roger Spencer was going to do some work but has not come forward to assist, I asked the club captain who is a qualified ground worker if he would look at it, to which he agreed. He may do this as a good will gesture, but the parish still may need to hire equipment. Unless anyone else can suggest anyone else.

Football Club

At present Halstead football club are using the playing field for matches and the pavilion for changing facilities. The captain did intimate that he is standing down next season so he is unsure as to whether the football club will continue to use it. I have emailed him, but as of yet have not had a response.

The pavilion still needs some updating with regards to flooring, kitchen area etc.

• **Parish News** – Cllr P. Bagby

Excluding some donated and heritage monies, the 2024 income from advertising and village fundraising event announcements was sufficient to cover production costs and generate a surplus of around £900.

There will be a production cost increase in 2025 of around 2% meaning break even target for the year to cover the publication of 10 issues will be £5,920.

Business advertising rates will increase by 5%. This is to cover the increased production cost and consolidate the magazine's finances to get to the target reserve level of 2 month's production costs. The rate for village fundraising events will not increase.

The magazine's format will continue with the current colour/black and white 36-page single month /40 page double month as it seems to meet current demand.

As at mid-November with the inducement of Early Bird rates, advertising has been guaranteed to secure publishing of the magazine up to October 2025.

014/2025 Finance

- a) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. December 2024

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. December 2024

- b) To receive the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2024/25

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2024/25

- c) To approve the payment of Accounts for December 2024 & January 2025 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Councils financial requirements. **All Agreed**

015/2025 Budget 2025/2026. Councillors to finalise the budget for 2025-2026

Cllr P. Collett proposed an expenditure of £13320 for 2025-2026 resulting in a Precept demand from BDC of £11445. Using the BDC Tax Base figure of 179.31 this produced £63.83p for a Band D property. An increase of £1.81p or 2.92%. Cllr P. Bagby seconded. **All Agreed**

016/2025 Items for Next Agenda

017/2025 Date of next meeting is on Thursday 13th. March 2025 at 7pm

Cllr D. Smith gave his apologies for the 13th. March 2025 meeting

Cllr P. Collett to chair meeting

018/2025 Councillors to note the 2025 meeting dates: 01.05.25: 10.07.25: 11.09.25: 13.11.25

019/2025 Closure of the Meeting

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

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 9pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

P Collett

P. Collett – Vice Chair

13th. March 2025