

ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Meeting of Ardleigh Parish Council held on Monday 8 June 2026 at 7.00pm at Ardleigh Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs Tim Barrott, Helen Fontaine, Jayne Marshall, Carolyn Mason, Sharon Smith, Richard Talbot, Jonathan Waters, Martin Whiteley and Chris Whitfield. Cllr Zoe Fairley, Tendring District Council (TDC) and Cllr Pat Murray, Essex County Council, (ECC) were also present.

Officers: Clerk, Rachel Fletcher, Deputy Clerk, Rachel Edwards, (minutes).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 2 members of the public were present in person. 1 member of the public joined online at 7.18pm and left at 7.52pm.

26.084	* Chair's Welcome
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. A warm welcome was extended to the Council's new Essex County Councillor, Cllr Pat Murray.
26.085	* Public participation session relating to items on the agenda
	Items raised: Member of the public in attendance was interested in becoming a Councillor having seen vacancies mentioned in the Ardleigh Chronicle. He gave a short presentation of his background, links to Ardleigh and potential to contribute to the Council. The Clerk had already forwarded details of the co-option procedure.
26.086	* Starring of items and approval of unstarred items without discussion
	Unstarred items after this point would be presented for collective approval with one motion and a single vote, without separate discussion. Starred items will be discussed. a) To identify any changes the Council wished to make to the items currently starred/ unstarred. Cllr Talbot requested 26.092d & 26.095a be starred. Council resolved to agree. b) To resolve to approve unstarred items including recommendations contained within reports. Council resolved to approve unstarred items.
26.087	* Apologies for absence
	None.
26.088	* Declaration and Register of Interests and Dispensations
	It was noted that previously agreed dispensations remained in place.
26.089	Minutes of Meeting held on 11 May 2026
	The Minutes of the meeting were approved as a true and accurate record. Delegated decisions were noted/reconfirmed. Document approved: Minutes Meeting 6 – 11 May 2026
26.090	* Planning Infrastructure and related issues
	a) To receive a report from the Planning Infrastructure Working Group (PIWG) including latest position regarding submissions and hearings for the Norwich to Tilbury (N2T) inspection. Cllr Whitfield updated the Council. Deadline 5 was 10 June 26. Draft submission was with Council's barrister to refine. Hearings 23/24/25 June 2026 – barrister would not attend as Planning Inspectors had made it clear that verbal submissions were not given greater weight than written ones. Chair noted excellence of submission documents prepared by PIWG. Cumulative impact avoided by N2T. Cllr Whiteley had mapped this. Councillors asked ECC Cllr Murray to advise on ECC input. He had asked County Officers for an update and the leader of ECC for his view. He would support the Parish Council if possible. Cllr Fairley had offered Cllr Murray an accompanied visit round the Ward; she would update him on infrastructure sites. Residents are priority of District and County Councillors who must support their concerns. Rosie Pearson from Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylons campaign would be in Parliament on 9 June to lobby MPs. The campaign would be submitting further legal challenges.

	Thanks given to Cllr Whitfield and a member of the public for their hard work, and time spent on submissions. <i>Online attendee joined at 7.18pm.</i> b) To consider a proposal from Cllr Smith in relation to a response from APC to TDC/Environment Agency (EA) about Slough Lane emissions/odours. (See attachment) Cllr Smith proposed a formal response as odours continued to persist. Councillors resolved to agree. Cllr Fairley would put the response forward on the Council's behalf. Clerks would make a formal request. c) To note the meeting with Anglian Water in relation to the Ardleigh to Great Horkesley pipeline project commencing Spring 2027 would take place on 10 June 2026. d) To note comments were made on the Planning Application for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. See idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications using reference 26/00424/TCBGC. Thanks to Cllr Whiteley for leading. Document approved: Suggested response from APC to EA and TDC re Slough Emissions and Odours June 26
26.091	Reports and Correspondence a) <i>District and County Councillor reports</i> To receive written reports from these Councillors and/or * to note items raised in public participation which are District or County matters. * Cllr Fairley to update the Council on communication with the EA regarding flies and odours from Slough Lane. Cllr Fairley had submitted a written report to EA. Response stated no evidence of link to landfill sites. Three verbal complaints about prevalence of flies to Cllr Fairley from the Bromleys, none from Ardleigh. Clerks would advise residents of complaint procedure on social channels – date/time/weather conditions needed. NG Chelmsford hearings – deadline to request to attend was 10 June 2026. Open hearing 23 June 2026. Cllr Fairley would not attend as on holiday. Cllr Murray reported changes made by new administration in relation to libraries, net zero, potholes, children's homes/foster care, flags and additional funding resource not spent by previous administration. He had been appointed as the new Deputy Chair. He was also Chair of Tendring Neighbourhood Watch and could supply Neighbourhood Watch stickers for application to wheelie bins etc at a cost of £1 per sticker. b) <i>Councillors' reports</i> including reports of training or meetings. Note training booked. c) * <i>Clerk's report</i> - To receive a report on key tasks undertaken since the last meeting including delegated decisions and key correspondence (see attachment). Tasks had been reported by email as no Clerks' Report this month due to time pressures. Meeting with TDC to discuss Wick lane and Old Ipswich Road had not been set up as limited response to request for availability. Documents attached: Cllr Fairley EIR response – EIR2026_20933, TDC Report June 2026
26.092	Planning Applications Applications published, received, validated and/or decided since the last meeting were noted. Comments on new applications and appeals were agreed as outlined below. It was noted that, where appropriate, reference would be made to the Neighbourhood Plan policies/Village Design Statement when commenting on planning applications. See https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications for current applications. It was noted that weekly lists provided by Tendring District Council (TDC) were sent to Councillors. Applications published/ received/ validated and/or decided since the last meeting were noted in a separate paper. To consider recommendations circulated prior to meeting/ items to be individually starred. a) 26/00561/FUL Reconstruction and conversion of an existing fire-damaged rural building to form three dwellings (Use Class C3) and erection of an additional new-build dwelling and car port, with associated vehicular access. Newlands Nursery, Slough Lane, Ardleigh CO7 7RU Suggested objection based on location outside of Settlement Development Boundary and contrary to Ardleigh's Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan. Council resolved to object.

	b) 26/00589/FULHH Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and porch. Orchard House, Frating Road, Ardleigh CO7 7SU Suggested no comment. Council resolved no comment. c) Discharge of conditions application for 20/00594/FUL: 26/00772/DISCON 23 Archaeological Investigation, 26/00700/DISCON 24 Detailed Surface Water Drainage Scheme, 30 Revised Sustainable Urban Drainage System, and 31 Package Treatment Plant, 26/00695/DISCON 4 Construction Environmental Management Plan, 26/00698/DISCON 19 Construction Method Statement and Construction Environmental Management Plan, 26/00694/DISCON 5 Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy. Land adjoining Ipswich Road and Wick Lane, Ardleigh CO7 7QL Comments would be made taking account of expert advice received in relation to these and related applications by Flying Trade Group/ Surya Foods for warehouse development. See also other/appeals below. d) * To receive an update from Cllr Smith on 25/01445/FUL, erection of an asphalt plant on land adjacent to Old Ipswich Road, Ardleigh. (to be considered at TDC July Planning Committee) Would be useful to meet with TDC Planning Department; multiple planning issues/applications in this area. Huge amount of information to process. Would discuss accountability/responsibility for new reservoir at the meeting with Anglian Water on 10 June 2026. Member of the public informed the Council that membership of the Ardleigh Reservoir Committee rotated every 5 years resulting in loss of continuity and limited long-term planning. Cllr Smith would draft further comments before the Planning Committee meeting on 7 July 2026. A longer verbal submission could be split between Cllrs Fairley and Waters. Clerks would add a holding objection to the application. Planning Direct could help; their previous report was extensive and should be referred to. <i>Online attendee left the meeting at 7.52pm.</i> Applications received after the publication date of the agenda: e) 26/00741/FULHH Proposed side facing dormer. Springwood, Fox Street, Ardleigh CO7 7PP Suggested no comment. Council resolved no comment. f) 26/00763/FULHH Single storey rear extension and first floor extension to rear and side. Merci, Frating Road, Ardleigh CO7 7SY Suggested no comment. Council resolved no comment. Document approved: Suggested planning comments for June meeting.
Other/Appeals	To note or consider any other applications including enforcement issues. a) * To note updates on the Flying Trade Group Application 20/00594/FUL. See planning item c above. Cllr Waters to update Council on action taken including Council's barristers and Planning Direct planning consultants. Council to confirm spending to date. The Council's barrister had issued a Letter Before Claim to TDC in relation to 26/00674/NMA Non-Material Amendment to 20/00594/FUL. Further correspondence would be sent by the barrister. Spend from reserves to date £8500. This would be reviewed outside of the meeting. Council confirmed that action to advance to a Judicial Review would be subject to further Council approval.
26.093	Community Projects, events and assets
	Community Projects and Initiatives To receive updates on any developments including reports received (eg Community Speedwatch, Ardleigh Practical Actions for Climate and Environment (APACE), Police reports, Millennium Green, Ardleigh Chronicle- see attachments). a) * To consider a proposal from Cllr Smith regarding investigating a Dark Skies policy. A proposal document had been distributed. The proposal would be brought back to a future meeting should Councillors and residents be interested. There would be a need to identify which areas in the Parish this could apply to. Documents attached: APC Checklist for Cemetery 1st June 2026, Dark Skies proposal
26.094	* Audit and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

	a) To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report of Accounts to 31 March 2026 (see attachment). Council resolved to note recommendations and bring back to a future meeting for further discussion. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) documents for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 to be considered (see attachments): b) To consider and agree the effectiveness of the System of Internal Control. Council resolved to agree the effectiveness of the System of Internal Control. Measures in place meet the needs of the Council with the exception being the lack of an IT policy which would be considered by a future meeting. c) To consider and approve by resolution the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1). Council resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1). d) To consider and approve by resolution the Accounting Statements (Section 2) which have been certified by the Responsible Financial Officer. Council resolved to approve each of the Accounting Statements (Section 2). e) To arrange for the Accounting Statements to be signed and dated by all required parties. Council arranged for the Accounting Statements to be signed and dated as required. f) To decide the dates for the exercise of Public Rights of Inspection - (proposed 10 June – 21 July 2026). To note the requirement to publish a notice of the Public Right of Inspection at least one working day before the period of inspection on the Council website along with the 'Council Accounts: A Summary of Your Rights'. (see attachment). Council noted the requirement to publish the Public Rights of Inspection notice and resolved to agree the dates for the exercise of Public Rights of Inspection as 10 June 2026 to 21 July 2026 inclusive. g) To consider whether to reappoint Legra Internal Audit Systems as internal auditors for 2026-27. Council resolved to reappoint Legra Internal Audit Systems. Documents approved: Accounts and AGAR forms to 31 March 2026, Revised Internal Audit Report 25-26.
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26.095 Parish Council Finance and Staffing

Cllr Murray left the meeting.

- a) * To confirm the bills for payment for Parish Council including payments made using delegated authority (see attachment).

Cllr Talbot questioned payments being approved in principle. Clerk advised this was in relation to contractors being engaged for work needed. A further payment of £5,100 to Cornerstone barristers would be discussed further with a view to reducing the bill if possible, prior to payment.

Cornerstone Barristers	£1,200.00
Waltons Tree Services	£3,078.00
Cloudy IT	£1,228.74
Legra Internal Audit Service H Symmons	£330.00
Rachel Edwards – Deputy Clerk	£67.20
Facilities/ Maintenance Officer expenses	£16.44
Clerk expenses	£94.79
Kingdom Recycling	£175.00
Great Oaktree Land Services	£750.00
Flameguard Fire and Security	£390.00
Cloudy IT	£54.48
N power	£76.93
Wivenhoe Town Council	£90.00
Norfolk Parish Training and Support	£78.00

	Cornerstone Barristers	£2,100.00	
	Planning Direct	£1,320.00	
	Ardleigh Village Hall	£40.00	
	Jill Hamblin	£276.03	
	EALC	£180.00	
	DM payroll services Ltd	£111.60	
	ICCM	£110.00	
	Cottage Landscapes	£543.84	
	Superfine Fencing	£99.00	
	Primec	£788.40	
	Mileage adjustments- to Clerk/Deputy Clerk	£22.80	
	Salaries/N.I. for all staff, excl. pensions	£4,500.00	
	b) * To note in accordance with minute 25.118b the Clerk had applied for a Parish Council Debit Card to remove the need for Officers to make and reclaim purchases personally on behalf of the Council. To discuss additional controls required. In 2025, the Internal Auditor recommended the Council had a means of direct payment rather than Clerks' reclaiming expenditure through expenses. Clerk had applied for a debit card. Cllr Fontaine proposed use of the debit card with £500 limit and 2 signatory approval prior to each purchase until staffing review in September. Cllr Waters seconded. Cllr Talbot objected, remaining Councillors resolved to agree. c) To note HMRC mileage allowance has increased from 45p per mile to 55p per mile backdated to 1 April 2026. Noted. d) * To note decisions and confirm recommendations from the Staffing Committee in relation to proposals brought forward by the Clerks following the Clerk's resignation and Council approving the Deputy Clerk moving up into the role. (see attachment). <i>In accordance with the Standing Orders and the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the Council resolved to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of 26.082a.</i> <i>Cllr Fairley left the meeting.</i> Following a lengthy discussion, Councillors reconfirmed decision of the previous meeting to appoint Rachel Edwards as the Parish Clerk and confirmed the delegated decisions of Staffing Committee as follows • <i>'Clerk – Rachel Edwards. 20 hours per week from 1 July 2026. Permanent role. Point 25 initially. (the appointment itself had been agreed at the previous full council meeting)</i> • <i>Temporary Responsible Financial Officer – Rachel Fletcher. 6 hours per week from 1 July 2026. Short-term role until 31 October 2026. Point 24.</i> • <i>Admin Support by Assistant Clerk. Up to 7.5 hours a week. Zero hours contract at previously agreed fixed rate.</i> • <i>Facilities and Maintenance Officer. 20 hours per week from 18 May 2026. 12-month contract. Point 20 (already in place, no changes suggested).'</i> It was noted that the Staffing Committee would review staffing requirements including RFO arrangements and support to the Clerk in September. It was suggested that an informal PC meeting would be needed in August to review whether the Staffing Committee should have delegated powers and to review the general staffing of the Parish Council. Documents approved: Payments for approval, Confidential appendix to Clerks' report June 2026, Draft Staffing Committee Minutes – 1 June 2026- <u>with amendments noted</u>.		
26.096	Amenities and Contracts		
	To receive reports and updates and agree actions (if any) on matters relating to Parish Council amenities including Council contracts and contractors, Play and Exercise equipment, Cemetery and churchyard matters, Village Hall matters, Other Amenities and Open Spaces issues, Biodiversity issues and updates (see attachments)		

	a) * To discuss the site visit made by Cllrs Barrott and Smith in relation to the land purchase on Harwich Road and consider next steps. <i>In accordance with the Standing Orders and the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the Council resolved to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of 26.082a.</i> Vendors have proposed an alternate solution to selling the land with vacant possession; Council solicitors recommend purchase only with vacant possession. Cllrs Barrott and Smith would speak to person using the land to clarify their situation and report back to Council. <i>Cllr Whitfield left the meeting.</i> b) * To note report submitted by the Facilities and Maintenance Officer and consider any recommendations (see attachment). Recommendations would be discussed at Village Hall meeting. Document attached: FMO Report for Parish Council meeting June 8th 2026, Confidential Update – Land adjoining Harwich Road, Ardleigh
26.097	Parish Council Governance and related items
	All documents available at https://ardleigh.website/formal-documents . (see dates in brackets)
26.098	Future meetings and meeting closure
	a) To confirm the scheduled next meeting on Monday 13 July 2026, 7.00pm, Ardleigh Village Hall (with remote link) and to flag any key issues for discussion. The Chair thanked the Clerk, Rachel Fletcher, for her years of hard work and dedication to the Council as she stepped down from the role. Councillors and other Officers were grateful for all she had done and gave a warm round of applause. She was presented with flowers, plants and a card containing vouchers. b) Meeting closed 8.42pm.

Signed by Meeting Chair.....on.....