



Chair: Cllr Toby Acton  
Clerk: Bonnie Jones | Ware Farm, The Street, High Roding, CM6 1NT |  
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## Meeting of High Ongar Parish Council

WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 – at 7:30pm  
at the High Ongar Village Hall

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### MINUTES

**Present:** Cllr Acton, Cllr Gallichio, Cllr Catlin and Cllr Burton

Bonnie Jones (Clerk)  
District Councillors Mary Dadd and Ray Balcombe  
5 Member of the public

**2024/25.144 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received from Cllr Arthur, Cllr Bosworth and Cllr Funnell.

**2024/25.145 Other Absences**

None

**2024/25.146 Declarations of Interest**

None

**2024/25.147 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January were a true record and were signed accordingly.

**2024/25.148 Public Participation Session**

There were 4 members of the public present who were residents of Millfield and wished to raise concerns surrounding the ongoing parking issues in the Millfield area.

One member of the public advised that due to the lack of parking people are having to park on pavements and on the grass area. This is causing mud to be traipsed over the pavements as well as the surface of the pavements being damaged from the cars. There are 14 houses with only 12 bays.

A second resident confirmed she has been communicating with Councillors and MP's on this same issue for over 10 years with no changes.

All members of the public in attendance agreed that the state of the area was not safe or satisfactory for any of the residents, and urged this matter to be addressed as soon as possible.

Cllr Dadd confirmed she had been investigating this issue over the past few weeks and will be discussing it in her report.

**2024/25.149 Reports and Members Reports**

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- a) Chairman's Report – Cllr Acton Advised that the waste lorry that has been seen loading and unloading rubbish in High Ongar has not been moved. District Councillor Balcombe advised he had an update on this in his report.
- b) Vice Chairman's Report – Not in attendance.
- c) District & County Councillors Reports – District Councillor Mary Dadd advised that she has been looking into the parking issues at Millfield after she was made aware that residents had received a letter proposing railings and parking meters be installed to help tackle the issue. It has since been confirmed that these proposed ideas will not go ahead. She has however visited the site with a senior officer to discuss possible solutions. Cllr Dadd would like to set up a committee with the Millfield residents to put together a consultation and some proposals for a resolution to the ongoing issues. Cllr Dadd noted that this will not be a short term fix and may take some time. Cllr Dadd also provided an update on various developments in Ongar that could have an effect on High Ongar.

District Councillor Balcombe advised that blue lidded wheelie bins will be implemented in July and plastic sacks will no longer be used. He also confirmed that the waste service is at 99.98% clear up rate. 18 Months ago 5,000 bins were missed every week, this number is now 0.

He also provided an update on the waste lorry causing various issues in the area, confirming this is being looked into by EFDC.

Cllr Balcombe advised that EFDC are looking at the continuous fly tipping in High Ongar, where two main hotspots have been highlighted for action.

d) Parish Councillors -

- Ward Councillor Report – Paslow Common - None
- Ward Councillor Report - High Ongar – Cllr Catilin advised that the “no access” sign that stops vehicles accessing the A414 from a back road has been knocked down. This has previously been reported by the Clerk, and she will get an update.
- Ward Councillor Report- Norton Mandeville – None

e) Highways Report- None

f) High Ongar Village Hall - None

g) Police Reports – PC Warren Shepherd was not in attended however provided the following written report:

*I just want to let the council know that I won't be able to attend any council meetings this year because none of the meetings this year fall on days I am working in the evening. I will still send in these reports, I just won't be able to attend in person. This isn't just High Ongar and is the same for most of my parish councils as well, I can only attend 4 meetings all year and 3 of those I attend in January.*

*With this I won't be able to answer questions from Cllr's like I do when I attend meetings so could I ask that if there are any questions that Cllr's have, that they're emailed to me beforehand so that I can answer the questions in the next report. In each report I will put the cutoff date for any questions to be sent to me for the next report.*

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*I think I missed the report for the January meeting, so I have done the crime stats for the whole of last year in this report like I would in the last.*

**Crime stats for last 12mth period:**

*Stats for period 01/01/24 to 01/01/25*

*128 calls to police, of these calls 45 crimes were recorded. Of those 45 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community:*

*1 Residential Burglaries  
0 Attempted Residential Burglary  
4 Residential Burglaries of Unconnected Buildings (garage or shed break in etc)  
1 Theft of Motor Vehicle  
2 Theft from Motor Vehicles  
1 Vehicle Interference (Trying Car Door Handles etc)*

*Stats for period 01/01/23 to 31/12/23 to compare.*

*140 calls to police, of these calls 78 crimes were recorded. Of those 78 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community:*

*0 Residential Burglaries  
0 Attempted Residential Burglary  
1 Residential Burglaries of Unconnected Buildings (garage or shed break in etc)  
6 Theft of Motor Vehicle  
2 Theft from Motor Vehicles  
2 Vehicle Interference (Trying Car Door Handles etc)*

*As you can see from the stats, there has been an 8.5% reduction in calls to police and an 42.3% reduction in crime*

**2024/25.150 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk provided a verbal report which included the below matters:

- Summer Play in the park session has been booked for 28/08/25.
- The Clerk is still trying to work out the best way to transfer the moneys from Lloyds Bank to new Unity Bank
- The Clerk will be visiting the Essex Records Office on 25<sup>th</sup> February to obtain historical documents relating the Harley Cottage sale. This is an ongoing confidential legal matter.
- It is understood that EFDC is considering adopting the local government association code of conduct. The Parish Council previously adopted EFDC code of conduct of 2016 and this remains the case today. HOPC last adopted it in May 2024.
- Chelmsford City Council are updating their local plan and are currently carrying out a consultation. This consultation ends on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Councilors confirmed that they would like to receive a copy of the consultation to view prior to considering if they wish to respond individually or as a Council.
- No update has been received regarding the inspection that took place on the illegal advertisement at entrance to High Ongar.

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- The Clerk has contacted NEPP regarding the ongoing issues of parking at the school. The correspondence of this was tabled at the meeting.
- MD landscapes who are currently contracted to complete the grass cutting in High Ongar have advised that they are no longer able to carry out the grass cutting as one member of staff is retiring and the other is focusing on contracts closer to home. The Clerk will be other local contractors to provide a quote for the works, however she was unsure as to the exact locations of the cuts. Councilors confirmed that Cllr Bosworth has great knowledge of the area and it may be best for him to meet with contractors to show the areas in which need to be cut. The Clerk confirmed she would discuss this with Cllr Bosworth and put in on the March agenda to consider.

#### **2024/25.151 Devolution**

On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the Government formally agreed that Great Essex would be one of six councils in England to form the Devolution Pilot Scheme. The Clerk provided the below brief update on Devolution, and how this could / will affect Essex County Council, Epping Forest District Council and High Ongar Parish Council.

*The government have agreed that Essex County can be one of the pilot county's for devolution. Essex currently has between 1.5 and 2 million residents. The government want the new Unitary authorities to have around 500,000 residents in each, meaning there is expected to be 3 or 4 unitary authorities in the whole of Essex. ECC have until March this year to submit their initial draft proposals for unitary authorities in Essex. They then have until August to submit their firm proposals. What this will mean for us is a unitary authority consisting of UDC and perhaps 2 or 3 other district councils in Essex. ECC will be responsible for deciding these and will only be consulting with the leaders of the district councils. The 2026 ECC elections have now been postponed and this has been agreed by government. Instead in 2026 there will be mayoral elections for the mayor of greater Essex. In 2027 there will be elections for the newly agreed unitary authorities, these new unitary authorities will run alongside both ECC and UDC for a period of 1 year. Therefore in 2028 the new strategic unitary authority will be formally created and both UDC and ECC will be no more. It is understood that it is up to the Unitary authority to decide what happens to parish and town councils, therefore we are not expected to know until 2027 what the potential future for this parish looks like. The government white paper suggests that Parish Councils will have a role to play in devolution, but it is not clear in which form that will be, with many county councillors thinking they will be abolished.*

The District Councillors in attendance confirmed that all involved are still very uncertain on how this new structure will look. Cllr Balcombe will be attending a meeting on Saturday where more information may be available.

#### **2024/25.152 Traffic through The Street, High Ongar**

Cllr Catlin advised that he has attended a meeting with the ONPCG where they have been discussing the effects of the new developments in High Ongar. Cllr Catlin believes these developments will result in an increase in traffic through High Ongar. This Council had previously written to Highways regarding the suggested speed and they have also agreed that they would like to be a part of the 20 is plenty campaign. Cllr Catlin advised he had been in contact with a number of police officers and confirmed that speed checks will be taking place in the near future.

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**2024/25.153 Street Light electrical testing**

At the previous meeting Councillors agreed to carry out electrical testing on all street lights in High Ongar at a cost of £500. Since then, the Clerk has been contacted by the company who will be completing the testing, who have advised that after looking at the street light inventory further, there appears to be units that are pole mounted which will require MEWP access due to them being high level. They have therefore provided a revised quote of £1,297 to complete the testing. All Councillors were happy to continue with the testing at the revised quote.

**2024/25.154 VE Day commemorative event**

The Clerk advised Council on what is being encourage for the VE Day celebration. Councillors discussed the matter in great detail with a number of different ideas being suggested such as a street party, event in Village Hall, war time band, food, bouncy castle etc. The Clerk confirmed she would look into a number of the suggested ideas and contact Councillors via email to discuss further. This item will remain on the agenda up until the event.

**2024/25.155 Epping Forest Association of Local Councils**

There are 24 parish and town Councils in the Epping Forest District. Attached to the agenda is a draft constitution for a new organisation called the Epping Forest Association of Local Councils. All 24 councils are being asked if they agree to the constitution and if they would like to be a member of this group. Councillors confirmed that they would like to be member of this new organisation.

**2024/25.156 Planning applications for consideration**

There were no planning applications to consider.

**2024/25.157 Planning Applications responded to by way of delegated powers**

Reference	Address	Description	Comments
EPF/2573/24	Paslow Common Farm, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, Ingatestone, CM4 0JY	Demolition and removal of existing Storage Yard, including all permanent and storage structures that form B1/B8 use class, to be replaced with 9nr. four bedroom traditional detached houses. <a href="https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000004VeLU">https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000004VeLU</a>	Councillors agreed to provide no comment on this application.
EPF/0088/25	The Maltings, Chelmsford Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0LQ	Retrospective application for construction of swimming pool and ancillary poolhouse structure, with associated works. <a href="#">Planning Application: EPF/0088/25</a>	Councillors agreed to provide no comment on this application.

**2024/25.158 Planning Updates**

The below planning matters were noted:

Reference	Address	Description	Note
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EPF/0129/25	24, Millfield, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9RJ	Approval of details reserved by a condition <a href="https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv0000055CCA">https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv0000055CCA</a>	The Parish Council is not able to comment on this application.
EPF/0148/25	Ashlings Farm, Ashlings Farm Cottage, Ashlings Farm Lane, High Ongar, Ingatestone, CM4 0JU	Approval of details reserved by a condition <a href="https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv0000058sYG">https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv0000058sYG</a>	The Parish Council is not able to comment on this application.
EPF/0166/25	The Orchard, Fingrith Hall Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JP	Approval of details reserved by a condition <a href="https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000005Cvin">https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000005Cvin</a>	The Parish Council is not able to comment on this application.

**2024/25.159 Finance**

**159.1** Councillors noted the bank balance as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 was £50,233.77.

**159.2** A bank reconciliation was tabled at the meeting. This was unanimously agreed and signed accordingly by the meeting Chairman.

**159.3** The below payments were agreed:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
Bonnie Jones	Clerks Salary - January	PAID	£499.30
NPower	Street Light Electricity – January	DD	£89.38
NPower	Street Light Electricity – December	PAID	£83.79
DR Metson & Partners	Hedge cut – Paslow Common	Online	£120.00
Skilled Tech Ltd	RMMSupport per Device, Microsoft 365 Business Basic and Microsoft 365 Business Standard (INV-1299)	Online	£87.13
TBS Hygiene Ltd	Dog bin collection (January – INV6405)	Online	£36.00
RCCE	2025/2026 membership fee	PAID	£79.80

Cllr Acton requested that the Clerk provide a column in the bank reconciliation which shows where we are in the overall budget.

The Clerk confirmed that the VAT reclaim for the period of February 2023-March 2024 has been received. The amount received was £1,090.01.

**2024/25.160 Outstanding Matters**

Add Co-option to March agenda.

**2024/25.161 Date of the next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th March.



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Cllr Dadd gave her apologies.

**2024/25.162 Exclusion of the public and the press**

In the event that an agenda item needs to be discussed confidentially, councillors will be asked to consider the following motion to be proposed by the Chairman: "That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed. However, an item may be placed in the Confidential part of the meeting so long as it is accordance with the Statutory Guidance.

Meeting end 9:03pm