



Chair: Cllr Toby Acton
Clerk: Bonnie Jones | Ware Farm, The Street, High Roding, CM6 1NT |
clerk@highongar-pc.gov.uk | www.highongar-pc.gov.uk

Meeting of High Ongar Parish Council

WEDNESDAY 9th April 2025 – at 7:30pm
at the High Ongar Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: *Cllr Acton (Chairman), Cllr Bosworth (Vice Chairman), Cllr Funnell, Cllr Catlin, Cllr Gallichio, Cllr Smith, Cllr Howlett, Cllr Arthur and *Cllr Ryan

Bonnie Jones (Clerk)
*22 Members of the public

**For part of the meeting*

2024/25.183 Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence received from District Councillor Ray Balcombe and Mary Dadd.

The Chairman also advised that he had today received Cllr Burtons resignation as councillor effective immediately. A notice of vacancy will be placed on the notice boards and website. Co-option will be included on the next agenda unless an election is called.

2024/25.184 Other Absences

None.

2024/25.185 Co-option of Councillor

The Chairman advised that the Council was considering co-option for the one uncontested councillor vacancy for Paslow Common Ward. There were 2 members of the public who put themselves forward for co-option. A vote was taken on both candidates present, the result of which is that Cllr Ryan was coopted onto Paslow Common Ward. The result of the vote was unanimous. Cllr Ryan gave his apologies for the rest of the meeting, but expressed his enthusiasm for his future role as Councillor.

2024/25.186 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Smith, Cllr Howlett, Cllr Arthur, Cllr Funnell and Cllr Gallichio declared a non-pecuniary interest in the agenda item discussing a possible VE Day event, as all Councillors are on the VE Day working group.

2024/25.187 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2025 were a true record and were signed accordingly.

2024/25.188 Public Participation Session

During the meeting a member of the public requested a poll, the specific question being "Does High Ongar believe in the Parish Council". It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the member of the public with further information after the meeting.

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One member of the public raised concerns on the extreme overgrowth on the footpath behind the Italian restaurant. The Clerk confirmed she would look into this and report it to Essex Highways.

2024/25.189 VE Day commemorative event

At the previous meeting a small working group was formed to liaise regarding the organisation of a VE day event in High Ongar. Members of the working group provided an update on the current plans for the event including a cost breakdown. The costings provided included advertising, decoration, entertainment and amenities. It was proposed by Cllr Acton and seconded by Cllr Bosworth that the costings of the event should be paid for by the Parish Council.

The working group confirmed that they were in discussion with veteran groups to take part in the event as well as discussion about a charity raffle. One member of the public advised that the Royal British Legion are currently selling bunting with the proceeds going to war veterans.

The Clerk also advised that all documentation for the road closure application has been sent to EFDC, who will conduct a 2 week consultation, with an update being given to the Clerk on 22nd April. The Clerk will keep the working group up to date on the progress of the application.

2024/25.190 Reports and Members Reports

- a) Chairman's Report – none.
- b) Vice Chairman's Report – Cllr Bosworth advised that he is very impressed with the works completed by the new grounds maintenance contractor.
- c) District & County Councillors Reports – Both Cllr Balcombe and Cllr Dadd were not able to attend however both provided a written report which was read by the Clerk broadly as follows:

Report from Cllr Ray Balcombe:

- The reported rubbish burning is currently being investigated by EFDC and environmental services. PC Warren Sheppherd is aware and will be visiting the site.
- EFDC are aware of the green waste van in High Ongar, and the matter is being dealt with.
- Cllr Balcombe is meeting with ECC to discuss possible red lines at the school.

Report from Cllr Mary Dadd:

- Cllr Dadd has a meeting on Sunday with Cllr Smith to discuss the ongoing issue with parking at Millfield. She will report more at the next meeting.
- The blue bins for recycling are being rolled out in June and July.
- Information with Ongar News.
- Information on Local Liaison Committee.
- Cllr Dadd attended an interesting meeting convened by Fyfield Parish Council on their concerns about road safety on the B184 which was chaired by Cllr Ray Balcombe. Cllr Dadd will send the Clerk the minutes of this meeting as some aspects equally apply to High Ongar residents' concerns.

d) Parish Councillors:

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- Ward Councillor Report – Paslow Common - None
- Ward Councillor Report - High Ongar – Cllr Gallichio and Cllr Funnell expressed concerns on the amount of litter within the village. Councillors agreed to put discussion of a possible village litter pick on the next agenda.
- Ward Councillor Report- Norton Mandeville - Cllr Smith raised concerns on the sewage issue in the ditch on Willingale Road. The Clerk confirmed she had an update on this in her Clerks report. She was also concerned on the state of the road due to the volume of traffic at Fickle Field along Norton Lane. The Clerk confirmed she will report this to Highways.

e) Highways Report – none

f) High Ongar Village Hall – Cllr Funnell confirmed various works are currently being undertaken at the Hall. He also advised that due to a number of issues FreeFoof4U has been given notice to quit, and are no longer allowed use of the hall from 24th July.

g) Police Reports – PC Warren Shepherd provided the below crime statistics:

Stats for period 01/12/25 to 01/03/25 - 37 calls to police, of these calls 18 crimes were recorded. Of those 18 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community:

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

Stats for period 01/12/23 to 01/03/24 to compare - 38 calls to police, of these calls 13 crimes were recorded. Of those 13 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community:

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

2024/25.191 Speed sign

It was agreed by Council to move this agenda item.

At the previous meeting Councillors expressed an interest in purchasing a solar speed sign. The Clerk has investigated this matter and found that the most cost effect way to install a speed sign is to apply for a License through Essex Highways. This will allow the Parish Council to procure their own speed sign as well as owning it and maintaining it in the future. This matter would still however have to be progressed via the Local Highway Panel Process. The Clerk advised of costings for the speed sign. It was Proposed by Cllr Arthur and Seconded by Cllr Acton and unanimously agreed by all Councillors to apply for a licence through Essex Highways for 2 speed signs in High Ongar. Councillors agreed to discuss the possible location of these via email, and report back with an update at the next meeting.

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Cllr Smith questioned if S106 money from the new development could be used towards speed signs in High Ongar due to the increased car coming through High Ongar from the new development.

2024/25.192 Clerk's Report

The Clerk provided a verbal report including the following matters:

- The Clerk provided a report from the Environmental Health Officer at EFDC regarding the sewage issues at Willingale Road, and the suspected contaminated water at the travellers site.
- The Clerk has not yet received an update regarding the fly posting at entrance to High Ongar. She will chase this.
- The Clerk has contacted the company who erected signage on Paslow Common, which is land owned by the Parish Council, and has requested that this be removed.
- The direct debit for the Information Commissioners Office has been successfully setup.

2024/25.193 Millfield parking update

Cllr Smith advised that when her previous meeting with Cllr Dadd took place the possibility of a questionnaire to the Millfield residents was suggested. However, Cllr Dadd felt this may not be necessary. Cllr Smith is meeting again with Cllr Dadd on Sunday. She will provide an update at the next meeting.

2024/25.194 High Ongar Grass Cutting

At the previous meeting Councillors felt that fortnightly cuts of various open spaces in High Ongar may not be necessary. It was requested that the Clerk advise Thornwood Ground maintenance (TGM) of the Council's budget and ask if they are able to provide cuts around this. It was formally agreed by Council to adopt the below cutting schedule:

Grass cutting locations: *Paslow Common and strim around bollards, The Allotments, Triangle Rookery Road.*

Schedule: *1 cut in March.*

2 cuts a month in April, May, June.

July and August – cut as needed due to hot and dry conditions

2 cuts in September (if needed)

1 cut in October

TGM have confirmed that they will stick to the agreed budget of £1,800 per year for grass cutting, which was previously agreed by this Council.

2024/25.195 Street Lights – electrical testing

At the previous meeting Councillors were provided with an electrical testing report which was completed on all streetlights owned by the Parish Council in High Ongar. One unit was identified as having several very significant structural defects that affect the units continuing performance, and it was recommended that the unit was replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable. A quote of £2,292.96 for the suggested works was previously provided. However, Councillors felt that they would like to inspect the streetlight themselves before anything is agreed.

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Councillors advised that they have now inspected the street light and feel the suggested works are required for the safety of the residents. This was unanimously agreed by all Councillor.

Due to a family emergency Cllr Acton (Chairman) had to leave the meeting. Cllr Bosworth (Vice Chairman) took his place as acting Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

2024/25.196 Rural England prosperity fund 2025/2026

The Clerk advised that the Rural England prosperity fund for 2025/2026 is now open for applications. This grant is for capital expenditure only and awards are anticipated to be from £10,000 to £50,000 with a minimum of 20% match funding or external funding added to the amount you bid for. Delivery of all projects must start immediately after the funding is received and be completed and delivering the projected benefits within a year. One of the aims of the fund is to support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.

Councillors asked if funding towards the speed sign would be suitable for this grant. A member of the public advised of the danger when coming onto the A414 for motorbikes who are unable to see oncoming vehicles. A possible "Think Bike" sign was suggested. The Clerk confirmed she would look into if these projects are suitable for this grant application.

Cllr Howlett advised that the village hall were looking to add some bowls courts at the bottom of the village hall outside area. The Clerk confirmed she would also look into if this is suitable.

2024/25.197 Planning applications for consideration

There were no planning applications to consider at the time this agenda was distributed.

2024/25.198 Planning Updates

Councillors noted the below planning updates:

Reference	Address	Description	Comments
EPF/0600/25	Birchgrove Farm, Woolmongers Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JX	Certificate of lawful development for existing use of the site and buildings that have been continuously used for storage and residential purposes for a period in excess of ten years. Planning Application: EPF/0600/25	The Parish Council are unable to make a comment on this application.

2024/25.199 Finance

199.1 Councillors noted the bank balance as of 31st March is £46,828.45

199.2 A bank reconciliation was tabled at the meeting.

199.3 Cllr Bosworth and Cllr Funnell signed the forms to close the Lloyds account. Cllr Acton is still to sign the form.

199.4 The following payments were agreed:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
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Bonnie Jones	Clerks Salary - March	PAID	£499.30
Information Commissioners Office	Registration fee	PAID	£52.00
TBS Hygiene Ltd	Dog bin collection (March)	Online	£29.28
Bonnie Jones	Essex records office – payment for Paslow Common enclosure map	Online	£5.20
Thornwood Grounds Maintenance	Grass cutting	Online	£174.00
Skilled Tech	Microsoft 365 Subscriptions and Support (March)	Online	£87.13

2024/25.200 Outstanding Matters

None.

2024/25.201 Date of the next meeting

The Clerk is on annual leave on the 14th May, which would usually be the date of the next Parish Council meeting and Annual Assembly. Unfortunately, there are not suitable dates in May to hire the High Ongar Village Hall. Cllr Gallichio suggested possible use the of the School or the May meeting and AGM on the 21st May. Cllr Gallichio will confirm this with the School and an agreed date and location will be posted on the website shortly.

2024/25.202 Exclusion of the public and the press

Land Adjacent to 202 Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

A brief update was provided by the Clerk.

Meeting end 21:14