



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

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You are hereby summoned to attend  
**A Meeting of High Ongar Parish Council**  
To be held on  
**Wednesday 14th January 2026 – at 7:30pm**  
at High Ongar Village Hall

for the purpose of transacting business as shown on the agenda below.

The public and press are welcome to be present. Please note that this meeting may be recorded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Jones', is written over a horizontal line.

Parish Clerk  
Date:09/01/2026

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#### **AGENDA**

- 2025/26.108 Apologies for Absence**  
Members are reminded that s85 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that apologies for absence must be received prior to the meeting.
- 2025/26.109 Other Absences**
- 2025/26.110 Declarations of Interest**  
To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest relating to items on the agenda.
- 2025/26.111 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**  
To agree the Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners and the May Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2025.
- 2025/26.112 Public Participation Session**  
The Chair will invite questions and observations from members of the public present. A maximum time of 15 minutes will be allowed, with 3 minutes per person.
- 2025/26.113 Reports and Members Reports**  
a) Chairman's Report – verbal report.  
b) Vice Chairman's Report  
c) District & County Councillors Reports - District Councillors are invited to submit a written report if they are unable to attend the Parish Council Meeting.  
d) Parish Councillors - verbal reports will be received if no written report has been submitted.  
- Ward Councillor Report – Paslow Common  
- Ward Councillor Report - High Ongar  
- Ward Councillor Report- Norton Mandeville  
e) Highways Report  
f) High Ongar Village Hall – To receive a report from Cllr Smith.  
g) Police Reports
- 2025/26.114 Clerk's Report**  
To receive any reports from the Clerk.

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- 2025/26.115 Local Government Re-organisation**  
To note, High Ongar Parish Council have been unable to find an appropriate date to meet in order to formulate a response to the public consultation on Local Government Re-organisation (LGR). The Clerk has urged all Councillors to respond to the consultation individually as Parish Councillors.
- 2025/26.116 Defibrillator Batteries**  
At the previous meeting Councillors agreed to purchase 4 new defibrillator batteries. The Clerk sourced a quote from The Defib Store LTD for £788 for 4 batteries. Councillors are asked to formally agree the purchase of these batteries.
- 2025/26.117 RCCE Membership 2026/2027**  
Councillors are asked to consider if they would like to renew their 2026/2027 RCCE membership. A leaflet explaining who RCCE are and what they provide has been attached to the agenda.
- 2025/26.96 Ongar Community Network**  
A new local 'emergency plan-type' initiative has been launched called "Ongar Community Network" and is being managed by the local news and information service Everything Epping Forest with the endorsement of Ongar Town Council. Attached to the agenda is a summary of this new group – a volunteer and information service for Ongar and the surrounding areas (High Ongar, Moreton, Willingale, Fyfield and Stanford Rivers). OCN is currently gathering contact information of people willing to help in an emergency, perhaps bad weather - flooding or storms - during or after a major fire, or during long periods of power or water supply issues. Councillors are asked to consider this group, and what action / information they wish to take / provide.
- 2025/26.96 Paslow Common sign**  
At the previous meeting Councillors agreed that they wished to install a new sign on Paslow Common to replace the existing one which is beyond repair. It was also agreed to move the location of it at the same time. The Clerk has contacted Archer signs to produce a quote for a new sign and 2 new metal posts. The Clerk has also contacted Thornwood Grounds maintenance to provide a quote for the removal of the previous sign and to install the new sign. It is hoped these quotes will be available in time for the meeting.  
  
Councillors are asked how they wish to proceed.
- 2025/26.96 2026 Meeting Dates**  
Councillors are asked to formally agree the below 2026 meeting dates:  
  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February  
*March: No Meeting*  
Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April  
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June  
Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July  
*August: No Meeting*  
Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November  
*December: No meeting*  
  
The Clerk has been unable to find a suitable March meeting date as well as March Hall availability. Councillors are asked if they are happy to not hold a meeting in March, or if they wish to hold a March meeting in another location.

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2025/26.96

### **Code of Conduct**

In December 2025, EFDC adopted a new Code of Conduct, based on the Model Councillor Code of Conduct developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). A copy of this is attached to the agenda. Councillors are asked Consider the adoption of this new Code of Conduct.

2025/26.96

### **Assertion 10 AGAR**

From the 2025/26 financial year, Parish and Town Councils must complete a new section in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) called Assertion 10: Digital and Data Compliance. This assertion confirms that the council is meeting modern digital, data protection, and accessibility standards. In practical terms, Assertion 10 requires councils to:

- Use a council-owned (preferably .gov.uk) domain for the official website and for all councillor and staff email addresses.
- Operate an accessible website that meets current accessibility regulations (WCAG 2.2 AA).
- Comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring personal data is processed lawfully and securely. • Recognise and fulfil the council's role as a Data Controller, with appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Publish required documents under the Freedom of Information Act and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- Have appropriate IT and email management policies to support secure and compliant digital operations.

The Clerk has been working on these matters over recent months, however the following is required to ensure the Council is able to confirm it is working towards compliance:

- Training for Councillors on Data Protection and Compliance (Clerk to provide update). To note, the Clerk has booked herself onto the CouncilWise training for Assertion 10, taking place on 30<sup>th</sup> of January.
- Adoption of IT Policy (to be considered and adopted at the February meeting)
- Council correspondence and general discussion need to move from WhatsApp to email. WhatsApp does not enable a record or trail of discussion which makes it very difficult for the Clerk, and WhatsApp leads the Council exposed to issues with Data Protection.

2025/26.96

### **CouncilWise**

Ann Wood and Pearl Willcox have announced the launch of CouncilWise Training & Support, a new company dedicated to delivering high-quality and innovative training and ongoing support to parish and town councils, their staff, and members. From 1st January 2026, councils will be able to gain access to:

- A wide range of training opportunities
- Ongoing support and resources
- Guidance to strengthen governance and foster effective collaboration across the whole council
- From the 1st of April 2026 Councils will be able to subscribe to additional benefits Further information and subscription prices are attached to the agenda.

Councillors are asked if they would like to subscribe to CouncilWise Training & Support from April 1st 2026.

2025/26.96

### **Street Lighting**

Section 97 of The Highways Act 1980 grants the power (but not the duty) to provide street lighting on Highways, however section sets out that if lightning is provided, the authority has a 'duty of care' to keep it properly maintained and safe. Failure to maintain can lead to legal consequences, particularly if injuries occur due to negligence. To meet its legal obligations, a parish council should:

- Have an asset register, detailing ownership and location
- Implement annual safety inspections and reactive repairs (this includes structural and electrical)

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- Ensure public liability insurance covers the assets
- Document and budget for ongoing maintenance and emergency response.

“Reasonable care” in the context of maintaining street lighting means the parish council must proactively ensure their lighting is safe and functional—balancing resource use with public safety. A Parish Council must implement a regular, risk-based safety inspection schedule (annual or more frequent). It is recommended that a ‘street lighting policy’ is created to set out a structure for such works. It does require the authority to be able to demonstrate that they have systems in place to maintain the public lighting equipment in a safe condition, including the detection of dangerous equipment.

This Council currently own 19 Street lights which are not currently part of an annual inspection routine. The Clerk has contact A&J Lighting who have provided a cost of £741 to complete and annual inspection of all 19 Street lights. This inspection includes visual inspection of column/bracket condition, visual inspection of light fitting, clean of all lenses for maximum light output, clean of all light fitting tops from debris and a written report. If any repairs are required, this will be invoiced separately. Councillors are asked how they wish to proceed with this matter.

**2025/26.99 Speed sign – Highways application licence**  
Clerk to provide an update at the meeting.

**2025/26.96 Budget and Precept 2026/2027**  
The Council is asked to consider the 2026/20257 budget, making any changes they feel are necessary, and agree the precept request for 2026/2027. Attached to the agenda is the draft budget spreadsheet for consideration. Specific attention should be paid to the yellow tabs for an overall summary, or the blue tabs for specific items. The District Council must be notified on this Councils precept request by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. Councillors are asked to contact the Clerk prior to the meeting if they have any questions about the spreadsheet. The Clerk will be able to update the spreadsheet at the meeting; however prior notification of any proposed changes would be extremely helpful.

Councillors are also asked to consider the current and expected level or ear marked reserves and general reserves, details of which will be tabled at the meeting.

**2025/26.101 Planning applications responded to by way of Clerks Delegated Powers:**

Reference	Address	Description	Comments
EPF/2479/25	Sparks Farm, Nine Ashes Road, Nine Ashes, Epping, CM4 0JZ	Demolition of existing buildings, Erection of self-build dwellinghouse (C3a) with ancillary outbuildings comprising new gym, garage and annexe with associated landscaping.	Clerk emailed on 16 <sup>th</sup> of December.  No responses received.

**2025/26.102 Planning applications for consideration**  
Councillors are asked to consider the below planning application:

Reference	Address	Description	Deadline for comments
EPF/1333/25	Springthorn, The Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NE	Proposed Partial Double Storey Side Extension (Including Ground Floor Garage) with Ground Floor Rear Extension. <a href="#">Planning Application: EPF/1333/25</a>	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
EPF/2542/25	251, Maltings, Nine Ashes Road, High	Loft Extension and Conversion of Garage to Habitable Room. <a href="#">Planning Application: EPF/2542/25</a>	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026

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#### 2025/26.103 Planning Updates

Councillors are asked to note the below planning updates:

Reference	Address	Description	Information
EPF/2417/25	Land at Mill Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9RQ	Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 6 Biodiversity Method Statement and 12 Contaminated Land of EPF/1718/18 (HONG.R1 - Erection of 7 three bedroom houses including new access from Millfields, provision of parking spaces, amenity space and landscaping). <a href="#">Planning Application: EPF/2417/25</a>	This Council is not able to comment on this application.
EPF/2529/25	Readings Farm, Norton Heath Road Old A414, High Ongar, Ingatestone, CM4 0LP	Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 3 Parking and turning area and 4 HRA of EPF/2026/25 (Prior Approval for change of use of an agricultural building to a commercial business use (Use Class E)). <a href="#">Planning Application: EPF/2529/25</a>	This Council is not able to comment on this application.

#### 2025/26.104 Finance

**104.1** To note the status of the accounts.

**104.2** Clerk to provide bank reconciliation, to be reviewed and signed by the Chairman.

**104.3** At the previous meeting Councillors were advised that there were two invoices from NPower that were in query. The Clerk contacted NPower who advised that invoices for September 2022 and August 2024 were credited to the account in 2025 and this was offset on the 6 invoices that was paid in September 2025. The two revised invoices of £100.57 were then re issued.

**104.4** To agree the following payments:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
Bonnie Jones	Clerks Salary (November & December)	PAID	£1,030.56
High Ongar Village Hall	Hall hire (September & October)	PAID	£72
Defib Store Ltd	Defib replacement batteries X4	Online	£957.60
A&J Solutions	Repairs to Millfield streetlight (9015)	Online	£145.80
Skilled Tech	Microsoft 365 & Support (December and January)	Online	£187.32
TBS Hygiene Ltd	Dog waste collection (December)	Online	£33.60
High Ongar Village Hall	November hall hire	Online	£38.00
Npower	Streetlight electricity (December)	DD	£100.44
HMRC	Employers NI (April-January)	Online	£147.39

#### 2025/26.105 Outstanding Matters

To note any outstanding matters.

#### 2025/26.106 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of High Ongar Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at the High Ongar Village Hall.

#### 2025/26.107 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



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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.

**Land Adjacent to 202 Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore**