



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 8th October 2025 – at 7:30pm
at the High Ongar Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Acton (Chairman), Cllr Catlin, Cllr Arthur, Cllr Bosworth and Cllr Gallichio*

2 Members of the public*
Bonnie Jones (Clerk)

**For part of the meeting*

2025/26.69 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr Gray, Cllr Smith, Cllr Funnell and District Councillors Mary Dadd and Ray Balcombe.

2025/26.70 Other Absences

Cllr Gallichio advised he would be a few moments late to the meeting.

2025/26.71 Co-option of Councillor

There were no members of the public present who wished to put themselves forward for co-option.

2025/26.72 Declarations of Interest

None

2025/26.73 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Cllr Arthur advised that in the minutes where it states "black lion pub" this is now the Italian restaurant. The Clerk confirmed she would make these changes. Other than this change the minutes of the September meeting were agreed and signed accordingly by the chairman.

2025/26.74 Public Participation Session

1 member of the public raised concerns surrounding the ongoing speeding issue in the village, especially in The Street. He advised that he had put together a petition for speed calming measures to be installed and received over 100 signatures.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council are aware of this and are currently in the process of seeking a licence from Essex County Council to erect 2 speed signs.

2025/26.75 Reports and Members Reports

a) Chairman's Report – None
b) Vice Chairman's Report - None
c) District & County Councillors Reports – There were no District or County Councillors in attendance.
d) Parish Councillors reports
Paslow Common – None
High Ongar – Cllr Catlin confirmed he had sent an email to both Tom Cunningham and Jaymey McIvor regarding the speeding on the A414 and the lack of signage. He included all Councillors and the Clerk in his email.
Norton Mandeville - Cllr Bosworth advised that the potholes along Norton Lane had been filled by a member of the public.

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e) Highways Report - None

f) High Ongar Village Hall – Cllr Acton advised that Cllr Funnell is no longer a member of the Village Hall Committee. He advised that the Council would need to appoint a representative to be on the committee.

g) Police Reports – None

2025/26.76 Clerk's Report

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

- The Clerk has contacted Highways licensing on the 17th of September and 1st of October for an update on the ongoing application.
- The Clerk hopes to receive a quote for the printing of the information leaflets by the end of the week. She will circulate this via email to Councillors.

2025/26.77 NJC Scale point increase

It was noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. This pay increase is applicable to the Clerk in accordance with her contract which is based on the NJC model. As such, the Clerks pay has been updated as of 1st September 2025. The NJC advise this pay increase should be retrospectively applied from 1 April 2025, and as such the Clerk has received her backdated pay to 1st April 2025.

2025/26.78 External Audit – Acceptance of exempt status

It was noted that PKF Little John has accepted this Councils notification of exempt status for the year end 31st March 2025.

2025/26.79 Village Green sign

At the previous meeting Cllr Gray advised that the sign located on Paslow Common was not clear and she felt would require painting. The Clerk has reviewed images of the sign and due to the deterioration of the sign it would be more cost effective for this council to purchase a new sign. The Clerk provided estimated costing for a new sign. Councillors agreed to move forward with the purchase of a new sign.

2025/26.80 Village Litter pick

At the previous meeting Councillors agreed that they would like to hold a village litter pick on a regular basis. The Clerk emailed Councillors to recommend that the Litter Pick project is a community led project and not run or organised by the Parish Council. The reason for this is that by involving the Parish Council it creates a layout of cumbersome bureaucracy which would have a negative effect on the litter pick. Cllr Gray has agreed to head the organisation of this event via the Friends of High Ongar Facebook group. Councillors agreed to move forward with the Village Litter pick as a community run event.

2025/26.81 Planning applications responded to by way of Clerks Delegated Powers:

Reference	Address	Description	Comments
EPF/1851/25	292, Garra, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0LA	Retrospective change of use of ancillary pool to swim school.	Objection
High Ongar Parish Council wish to object to the above planning application on the following grounds:			
1. Scale and Intensity of Commercial Use			

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The proposal admits to 4 full-time staff and 14 car parking spaces. This goes far beyond what could reasonably be regarded as a modest or ancillary home-based activity. The scale of the operation represents a material intensification of use, wholly incompatible with a residential setting.

2. Highway Safety and Parking

Provision for 14 parking spaces in a rural lane context will generate significant vehicle movements each day. Nine Ashes Road is not designed for this level of traffic. The resulting congestion, cars obstructing sight lines, and the increased risk of accidents present clear highway safety concerns.

3. Noise and Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed operating hours (up to 8pm weekdays) together with amplified sound within the pool enclosure will result in continuous disturbance to neighbouring residents. This includes crying infants, group sessions, and instructors shouting. Unlike temporary disruption (such as building works), this impact would be ongoing and permanent, materially harming neighbours' ability to enjoy their homes and gardens.

4. Conflict with Planning History

The earlier Certificate of Lawful Development (EPF/1906/21) was explicitly limited to 1-to-1 use by residents. The current application seeks retrospective approval for a much larger, fully commercial operation. Granting permission would effectively regularise ongoing breaches and undermine the integrity of local planning controls.

5. Sustainability and Policy Conflict

The business model relies on customers travelling from a wide catchment area (e.g. Rayleigh, Braintree), entirely by car. This is not a sustainable pattern of development and directly conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan objectives to reduce reliance on private car travel.

For the reasons above, the proposed development is inappropriate in scale, harmful to highway safety and residential amenity, inconsistent with previous planning determinations, and contrary to sustainable development principles. We therefore respectfully request that the application be refused.

EPF/1840/25	199, Former Larkins Farm, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JY	Variation of Conditions 13 and 14 trees and landscaping of EPF/2601/18 (Demolition of an existing structure and replacement with 2 x detached dwellings with associated new vehicle crossover, garages, landscaping and other associated works).	No comments
EPF/1812/25	181, Berry Farm, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JY	Open air pool to rear with small pump room to side of garage.	No comments

2025/26.82 Planning applications for consideration

Reference	Address	Description	Deadline
EPF/1969/25	Nash Hall, The Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NL	Retrospective application for construction of car park. Planning Application: EPF/1969/25	21 st October
No objections			
EPF/1957/25	Nash Hall, The Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NL	Retrospective application: Change of use of agricultural buildings to B2 flexible use and storage of empty shipping containers. Planning Application: EPF/1957/25	20 th October
Councillors agreed to put an objection forward requesting that an agreed Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) and lorry routing plan is formally agreed prior to any permissions being granted.			

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2025/26.83

Planning Updates

Councillors noted the below planning updates:

Reference	Address	Description
EPF/1531/25	292, Garra, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0LA	Outline application all matters reserved except access for up to 8 residential units. Planning Application: EPF/1531/25

High Ongar Parish Council **objects** to this application for the following reasons:

1. Green Belt - Non compliance with EFDC Local Plan Policy DM4 Green Belt, and NPPF Paragraph 153

Rationale: The applicant states they consider the site to be classified as Grey Belt as defined under paragraph 155(a) of the NPPF. The Parish Council has completed an assessment of the land based on the criteria for determining Grey Belt including PPG dated 27th February 2025, and advise that this site **fails** to meet the criteria on the following grounds:

- The site is NOT in a sustainable location, as defined under NPPF paragraph 55(c).
- NPPF paragraph 110 states significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This site does not fulfil this criteria.
- NPPF paragraph 115 states that in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location.

Therefore, the site should be classified as assessed as Green Belt. The NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The applicant has not provided any very special circumstances to justify the loss of Green Belt.

2. Biodiversity Net Gain – Non compliance with Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Rationale: Applications are required to deliver a mandatory 10% measurable biodiversity net gain. This application fails to provide sufficient information to confirm this can be achieved.

3. Effect on Listed Building – non compliance with EFDC Local Plan Policy DM7 Historic Environment, parts A, B, C and F, and Paragraph 202 of the NPPF

Rationale: Directly adjacent to the application site is the property known as 'Hardings' - a building listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for its special architectural or historic interest (listed building entry number 1337236). The application fails to consider the impact of the proposals on the setting of this listed building. The NPPF states that heritage assets (which includes listed buildings) are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Should this application be recommended for approval, the Parish Council confirms its intention to attend and speak at any planning committee meeting.

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2025/26.84 Finance

84.1 Councillors noted the bank balance as of 30th September was £49,202.92

84.2 A bank reconciliation was tabled and signed accordingly by the Chairman.

84.3 The below payments were agreed:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
Bonnie Jones	Clerks Salary (September) + Backdated pay (NJC scale point increase)	PAID	£595.18
EFDC	Summer 2025 Play in Park session	Online	£82.50
Npower	Street Light Electricity used (August and September)	Online	£100.57
Thornwoods Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting (September)	Online	£348.00
Skilled Tech	RMM, antivirus and Microsoft 365 for period October 2025	Online	£93.66

2025/26.85 Outstanding Matters

Cllr Bosworth advised that a number of the defibrillators are showing low battery, which will need replacing in the near future. He provided the Clerk with some costing for new batteries which she will look into.

Cllr Arthur question if the previously agreed new speed signs had any ongoing maintenance costs. The Clerk confirmed she would look into this.

2025/26.86 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of High Ongar Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 12th November 2025 at the High Ongar Village Hall.

2025/26.87 Exclusion of the public and the press

Land Adjacent to 202 Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

The Clerk provided a quote for legal advice. It was agreed to seek a second comparison quote before moving forward.

Meeting end: 20:23