



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 10th September 2025 – at 7:30pm
at the High Ongar Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Acton (Chairman), Cllr Funnell, Cllr Gray and Cllr Catlin.

25 Members of the public*
Bonnie Jones (Clerk)
District Councillor Mary Dadd

**For part of the meeting*

2025/26.47 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Smith, Cllr Bosworth, Cllr Gallichio, Cllr Arthur. Apologies also received from District Councillor Ray Balcombe.

2025/26.48 Other Absences

None.

2025/26.49 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gray advised that she was a friend of Cllr Gallichio who owns the Foresters Arms. She felt this was a conflict of interest when discussing planning application EPF/1380/25. The Clerk confirmed that there were no decisions to be taken on this application.

2025/26.50 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Cllr Mary Dadd queried minute 2025/26.29 where her support for the speed sign application was discussed. She advised that she did support the Parish Councils efforts in their application for speed signs but could not provide any written report without any evidence of speeding in the area. The Clerk confirmed she would make these changes. Subject to this change it was resolved that the minutes of the July Parish Council meeting held on 2nd July 2025 were a true record and were signed accordingly.

2025/26.51 Public Participation Session

As all members of the public were present to discuss agenda item 2025/26.62, it was agreed to move this agenda item forward.

One member of the public advised he had been nominated to speak on behalf of all residents of Nine Ashes Road regarding application EPF/1531/25. He queried a number of points made in the planning application including:

- Owner of the land had applied for planning permission 10 years ago which was not granted. He hoped the same would happen on this occasion.
- The location of the proposed properties are on a sharp bend and not appropriate place for any houses to be built.
- No local infrastructure to support any new houses in the area.
- Alterations to green belt boundaries should not be made on this occasion.
- Does not fit the criteria for grey belt land.
- The area of the proposed properties is currently deemed as agricultural and grazing land.

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A number of the members of the public present queried the next steps after the deadline for comments had ended. District Councillor Mary Dadd advised that if the planning officer does not provide a recommendation, then the planning application will be automatically denied. However, if a recommendation is provided and there are 6 or more objections then the application is taken to committee. She confirmed that one resident was able to speak for up to 3 minutes at this stage.

Reference	Address	Description	Details
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	Deadline for comments: 11 th September (extension granted)
Councillors agreed to put forward an objection on this application based on the comments provided by members of the public.			

2025/26.52

Reports and Members Reports

- Chairman's Report – Cllr Acton confirmed that the Sanuk restaurant sign that had been erected at the entrance to High Ongar has now been removed.
- Vice Chairman's Report – Cllr Bosworth was not present however he had provided a written report which was read out by the Clerk, and included:
 - Some of the potholes have been filled down Norton Lane.*
 - Fly tipping incident on Rookery Road on Saturday night has been reported.*

Cllr Gray advised that a resident of Norton Lane spends his own money to fill the potholes.

- District & County Councillors Reports – Cllr Dadd provided a verbal report which included the following matters:

Local Government Reform

- EFDC held an informative briefing meeting for EFDC Cllrs on 3rd September. ECC will be submitting its preferred business model by 26 September. There are several models on how many unitary authorities will be formed. The results will not be known for several months.
- The likelihood is that EFDC will combine with Brentwood, Harlow and probably Chelmsford. The final choices will relate to financial viability and efficiency of services- especially social services. Essex seemed to be in favour of 3 unitary authorities partly because of delivering social services more effectively than would be possible with 4 or 5 authorities. If that is the case, we may be with Maldon, although another 'model' did suggest Uttlesford.
- ECC has set up a website to ensure that residents are kept informed
<https://www.essexlgrhub.org/stronger-greater-essex> -however it does not show all the options and costings as yet.
- There is also concern about services relating to local communities' needs and how that input will be effected. There could be Neighbourhood Committees.
- The role of local town and parish councils is as yet unknown especially as some councils in Essex do not have these organisations (Local Councils Liaison Meeting on 18th September is likely to be informative)

Cllr Dadd advised she would provide further information, including slides, when available.

Town Partnerships and Community Hubs

- Following excellent reports of initiatives that EFDC Economic Development and Communities presented to EFDC scrutiny committees earlier this year, Cllr Dadd confirmed she has been in talks with relevant officers to ensure that Ongar was included in the next tranche of communities to benefit.

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Town Partnership (this is not the same as the previous town centre partnerships or forums but includes businesses in the wider community including High Ongar, Fyfield etc, as well as local organisations etc)

- OTC, Ongar Community Champions and other organisations in Ongar have already had several meetings to see if the existing team who very successfully organise Ongar Town festival and the Christmas lights could expand their aims and objectives to fulfil this role.
- A community Interest Company had been proposed by Cath Honeywell and Kelly Stone and the business model would support the businesses and local organisations. It is hoped that EFDC will accept this model.
- As suggested at OTC last meeting, this would be the opportunity to take forward some of ONP Projects and Actions with the expected initial funding.

Community Hub

- Work is also progressing for a community hub for Ongar and its wider area, whereby local residents will be able to meet and access a variety of different services. Once again Cath Honeywell, EFDC and Cllr Dadd are in talks to progress this, based on existing community hubs in other parts of EFDC. Once more details are available it is hoped that OTC and HOPC will also be involved.

A414 Speed restrictions

- Residents will have noted the speed restrictions of 40mph from North Weald to Four Wantz
- ONPCG road improvements subcommittee has invited Cllr Lee Scott, Chair of SERP to its meeting at the end of October, when Cllr Catlin and Cllr Dadd will be able to ask HOPC queries

Planning Process review

- A 9 month review after the changes was scheduled for July, but Councillors have not heard when this is taking place or how.

d) Parish Councillors -

- Ward Councillor Report – Paslow Common – Cllr Gray advised that the sign on Paslow Common could do with being painted. The Clerk confirmed that she would look into this.
- Ward Councillor Report - High Ongar – Cllr Funnell and Cllr Catlin advised that they cleared the footpath next to the school a few weeks back. They confirmed that it would need clearing again in the near future.
- Ward Councillor Report- Norton Mandeville – None

e) Highways Report – None

f) High Ongar Village Hall – None

g) Police Reports – None

2025/26.53

Clerk's Report

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

- Microsoft 365 and IT support package has been renewed. This is for a 12-month period.
- Damaged Road sign at entrance to High Ongar from A414 had already been reported. The Clerk has requested she is updated as to when repairs will take place.
- The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Howlett and Cllr Ryan have resigned from their position as Councillors. Notices of vacancies will be erected and if no poll is called from 14 of the date of notice, then co-option can take place at the next meeting in October. There are now currently 2 vacancies for Councillors in Parslow Common Ward.
- Cllr Catlin had previously advised the Clerk that the dog waste bin behind the Italian restaurant was overflowing and had not been cleared. The Clerk contacted TBS Hygiene who confirmed

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their schedule of emptying the dog bins in High Ongar. They confirmed they would ensure that this bin will be emptied on their next visit.

2025/26.54 Internal Audit

- a) The Internal Audit report for 2024/2025 financial year has been received and was attached to the agenda. This Council received two recommendations, one of which has been actioned, and the second is to erect a privacy notice on the Parish Council website. Councillors agreed to this. The Clerk confirmed that she has drafted a privacy notice which she will send to Councillors to agree.
- b) Councillors agreed the appointment of Heelis & Lodge as this Councils internal auditor for the 2025/2026 financial year.

2025/26.55 Information leaflet

At the previous meeting Councillors requested a number of changes and additions to the drafted information leaflet. These changes have now been completed, and a second draft of the leaflet was attached to the agenda. Councillors advised that due to changes to Councillors in the future they requested that the Clerk signpost to the website instead of including Councillors details on the leaflet. The Clerk confirmed she would make these changes.

The Clerk confirmed she would look at getting a quote for the printing of the leaflet.

2025/26.56 Litter Pick

At the previous meeting Councillors agreed to erect a notice requesting volunteers for a village litter pick. The Clerk confirmed she had received confirmation of 3 volunteers who wish to take part. Councillors agreed that they would like to complete a village litter pick on a continuous basis throughout the year. Councillors agreed to discuss a possible date via email.

2025/26.57 Changes to NALC Model Financial Regulations

The Clerk advised she has been made aware of a number of changes that have been made to the NALC Model Financial regulations that were adopted at the previous meeting. The changes are as follows:

5.4 For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.

5.7 For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.

5.11 Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.

Councillors agreed to the additional changes and readopted the NALC Financial Regulations.

2025/26.58 Street Lighting

- a. It was noted that during this councils electrical testing on all its streetlights a fault was detected on street light 9007, opposite the Italian restaurant. Works on this streetlight have now been completed.
- b. The Clerk had previously received an update from a member of the public advising that a Street Light was not working outside Sunnyside (9001). Previous Councillor Steve Howlett subsequently checked all the streetlights in the area and provided a report, three of which were not working. The Clerk advised she had contacted A&J Lighting who completed a site visit and made number of repairs.

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2025/26.59

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Councillors noted that a new website has been launched to help residents, businesses and stakeholders stay informed and involved about LGR. Leaders and chief executives from councils across Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock have come together to launch essexlgrhub.org, set to be a central, impartial platform dedicated to providing clear, accessible information about the future of local government in Greater Essex. By 2028, the number and shape of councils operating across the region may look very different. The UK government is encouraging councils to simplify how they work, aiming to grow the economy and ensure communities are closer to decision-making. The new website offers:

- An overview of LGR in Greater Essex
- A short explainer video
- The government's aims for LGR
- Latest news and updates
- Frequently asked questions

Councils are currently developing business cases that explore options for unitary arrangements as part of LGR. These will be made available as they are finalised. Throughout September, councils across Greater Essex will take the business cases through their own governance processes. Final submissions to the government are expected by 26 September 2025. Following this, the government will run a public consultation, which is anticipated in the autumn, with a recommendation to the Minister on a final proposal expected in March 2026.

2025/26.60

EFDC Community Infrastructure Levy

Councillors noted that EFDC is currently consulting on a draft charging schedule for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be set for the Epping Forest District. The CIL is a locally set charge (referred to as a levy) on new development which the Council can choose to introduce. The levy is based on the size and type of development and once set is mandatory to pay and non-negotiable. The funds raised would be distributed by the District Council to provide infrastructure which is required to support new development within the local area. This infrastructure could include roads, transport facilities, flood defences, education facilities, medical facilities, sporting and recreation facilities, and open spaces. Currently when new development proposals are approved by the Council, it is common for an agreement to be made (known as a planning obligation, section 106 agreement or developer contribution) for developers to either provide new or improved infrastructure, or financial contributions towards the provision of new or improved infrastructure in the area. This could include highways improvements, new or improved parks and play facilities, and services and facilities such as new or improved schools and health facilities. The CIL will not replace the Council's current methods of obtaining infrastructure and funding through planning obligations. The CIL provides an additional mechanism to obtain financial contributions towards new and improved infrastructure. The levy may be payable on development which creates a new or additional internal area, where the gross internal area of new build is 100 square metres or more. Development, which is less than 100 square metres, but which involves the creation of a new house or flat, may also be liable to pay the levy. Some developments may be eligible for discretionary relief or exemption from the levy. This includes residential annexes and extensions, social housing, charitable development, and houses and flats which are built by 'self-builders'. For Parish Councils without a Neighbourhood Plan, the local community typically receives 15% of CIL revenues from development in their area. For Councils with a Neighbourhood Plan, this share increases to 25%, and it is paid directly to the parish or town council to spend on infrastructure or anything else that supports development of the area. Full details of the CIL can be found at: [Community infrastructure levy - Epping Forest District Council](#). The Clerk advised that this council will not be able to formally respond as the deadline for responding to the consultation is Tuesday 9th September 2025.

2025/26.61

Planning applications responded to by way of Clerks Delegated Powers:

Reference	Address	Description	Comments
EPF/1306/25	Spriggs Farm, Willingale Road,	Construction of stables, tack room and hay store for personal use.	No comments

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	High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 0QH		
EPF/1330/25	229, Long Acre, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JZ	Construction of detached garage.	No comments
EPF/1380/25	Foresters Arms, The Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NH	Retrospective advertisement consent for replacement hanging sign and facade sign.	No comments
EPF/1444/25	12 Paslow Hall Cottages, King Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NP	Alterations to change two semi-detached houses to form a single dwelling.	No comments
EPF/1379/25	Foresters Public House, The Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NH	Retrospective Listed building consent for replacement external lighting.	No comments
EPF/1466/25	Spencer House, King Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NR	Proposed American barn style stables together with menage/arena and change of use to equine.	No comments
EPF/1634/25	Leys Business Centre, Bottom Yard, Chelmsford Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NW	Construction of two commercial B2/B8 flexible use units.	No comments
EPF/1641/25	Land adjacent to Mill Cottage, Mill Lane, High Ongar, CM5 9RQ	Demolition of existing outbuildings and construction of new self build dwelling.	Comments below
High Ongar Parish Council wish to object to the proposed development behind Mill Cottage on the following grounds: - Overdevelopment of the Site - The scale and intensity of the proposal appears excessive in relation to the character and size of the surrounding area. - It would have a negative impact on the rural/heritage/residential setting. - Highway Safety Concerns - The proposed entrance is positioned in a particularly dangerous location on the lane. - There have been numerous near misses in this stretch of road due to limited visibility, narrowness, and the speed of approaching vehicles. - Adding a new access point at this position would significantly increase the risk of accidents for both motorists and pedestrians. - Unsuitable Access Position - The entrance is in the worst possible position along the lane, with restricted sightlines and no safe passing space. - This would not only endanger residents but also place an additional burden on road users in an already hazardous spot. For the reasons above, High Ongar Parish Council strongly object to this application. The proposal represents overdevelopment of the site and introduces serious highway safety risks that cannot be mitigated by conditions.			
EPF/1643/25	Mulberry Cottages, Chelmsford Road,	Grade II listed building consent for replacement roof and install insulation.	No comments

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2025/26.62 Planning applications for consideration
Discussed in agenda item 2025/26.51.

2025/26.63 Planning Updates
There were no planning updates to note.

2025/26.64 Finance

64.1 Councillors noted the bank balance as of 31st August was £53,566.65.

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

64.3 To following payments were agreed:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
Bonnie Jones	Clerks Salary (July & August)	PAID	£998.60
Electrical Testing Ltd	Replacement of OHL bracket and secondary isolator (9007)	Online	£2,292.96
Thornwood Ground Maintenance	Grass Cutting (July, August and September	Online	£522.00
Skilled Tech Ltd	Microsoft 365 & IT Support (August & September) Website Hosting & registration of .gov domain	Online	£427.32
TBS Hygiene	Dog wate collection (July, August and September)	Online	£109.20
Heelis & Lodge	Internal Audit 2024/2025	Online	£170.00
High Ongar Village Hall	July hall hire	Online	£38.00
A&J Lighting	Repairs to Street lights (9001 and 9002)	Online	£345.60

64.4 The below income was noted:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
EALC	Overspend on 2025/2026 EALC Membership fee	Online	£50.00

2025/26.65 Outstanding Matters
The Clerk confirmed she would chase the progress of the Speed Sign License application.

2025/26.67 Date of next meeting
The next meeting of High Ongar Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 8th October 2025 at the High Ongar Village Hall.

Apologies received from Cllr Gray and District Councillor Mary Dadd.

2025/26.68 Exclusion of the public and the press

Land Adjacent to 202 Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

The above matter was discussed by Councillors, and it was agreed to look into hiring a solicitor to act on behalf of High Ongar Parish Council.

Meeting end: 21:01