



**GREAT HORKELESLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**  
**IN GREAT HORKELESLEY NEW VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM**

**Those present:**

Cllr Arnold (Chairman)	Cllr Baker
Cllr Banks	Cllr Burns-Langton
Cllr Jarvis	Cllr Mead
Cllr Tempest	

**25/101 Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**25/102 Apologies and Reasons for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Sudbery.  
Cllr Jarvis had advised that she would be arriving late.

**25/103 Declaration of Interests**

No member declared an interest with respect to any item on the agenda.

**25/104 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

**25/105 Have Your Say – Public Open Forum**

No members of the public were present.

**25/106 Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no members of the public present, so the resolution was not passed.

**25/107 Personnel**

The Chairman had recently asked the Clerk about her workload, as the Council is in the process of taking on more assets, has established additional Committees and the parish is currently dealing with planning applications for major developments. Prior to the meeting, the Clerk circulated a proposal for a slight reorganisation of the current staffing structure, including some changes to job titles and duties which would be reflected in increased hours and pay where necessary.

**It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to approve these changes, should the money be available within the budget.

**25/108 Finance**

(a) The Statement of Accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 was noted, and Cllr Banks (who is not a bank signatory) checked and signed to say that balances reconciled with those on the November and December bank statements, and also carried out a spot check of the bank reconciliation.

- (b) The November and December payments lists were approved in accordance with the 2025/26 Budget.
- (c) The draft minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026, including that the Third Quarter accounts for the 2025/26 financial year were reviewed and approved, were noted. Cllr Baker reported that the meeting went smoothly, and members had received all documents in good time so they could be looked through in detail before the meeting. Cllr Arnold reiterated his point in F25/23 to all members, regarding the use of Council reserves.
- (d) The list of Direct Debit payments to be made in the 2026/27 financial year was approved.
- (e) The Clerk advised that the Council's current bank, Unity Trust, does not offer debit cards. This is making it difficult to start up a new mobile phone contract for any staff members and also means that staff are having to use their personal accounts to purchase items such as cleaning products for the Village Hall for the Council to expense.  
**It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) in principle that the Parish Council should look to open an additional bank account, to be used solely for Village Hall and staff expenses and mobile phone direct debits. The Clerk will look into possible options.

*Cllr Jarvis entered the meeting.*

### **25/109 Budget & Precept**

- (a) Members reviewed the Second Draft of the 2026/27 Budget as recommended by the Finance Committee and circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk answered questions from Cllr Jarvis and Cllr Burns-Langton regarding some of the lines within the budget.  
Cllr Arnold reported that someone had been to look at the sound machine at the Village Hall and said that a new one is not necessary. They would be happy to provide a set of instructions for hirers, label the system and install a power supply for the Bluetooth receiver for free, so the Finance Committee had reduced Hall Improvements (200/4330) by £4,000 for this draft of the budget. Cllr Arnold also stated that this draft of the budget includes the staffing changes discussed in 25/107 above and a predicted 5% salary increase for all staff.
- (b) It was considered whether clearing the footway along the A134 north of Tile House Lane could be afforded in the 2026/27 financial year, but no member proposed to accommodate this within the budget as it would be much too expensive.
- (c) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Baker) to include an additional £1,000 within the budget to carry out a new Housing Needs Survey for the parish. **It was further agreed** (proposed Cllr Burns-Langton, seconded Cllr Arnold) to include an additional £300 in Hall Improvements (200/4330) for a new external light on the side of the Village Hall.  
**It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to approve the budget for the 2026/27 financial year subject to these two additions.
- (d) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) that, based on the Final Budget approved in (c), the Council Tax for Parish Purposes (precept) requirement for the 2026/27 financial year be set at 55.96, with no reserves used to support this. This gives a 23% increase on last year's precept figure and works out as just over £1 more per month for the majority of properties in the parish.

### **25/110 Reports from Members and Officers of Other Authorities**

Borough Cllr Laws had sent a report to the Clerk prior to the meeting, including confirmation that the election of the new Mayors has been pushed back to 2028 by the government and there is still uncertainty over whether the postponed 2025 County Council elections will take place this May. Colchester Conservatives have consistently called for all elections to go ahead. Repairs to Severalls Lane Bridge have been delayed following the government's cancellation of the A12 upgrade scheme but works are due to take place (finally) this year.

Cllr Arnold reported that a resident previously approached the Council with a suggestion that the parish could join the local Community Special Constable Scheme. The Chairman and the Clerk had a meeting with Dave Geary and Les Hawkins from Essex Police and the Clerk provided a web link with details about the scheme to all members prior to the meeting. Community Special Constables are unpaid volunteers with the same powers as regular police officers, whereby they patrol the parish for approximately eight hours a week and the Parish Council would only need to fund minor expenses, resulting in a total cost of much less than £1,000 a year. If members agreed to pursue this scheme then the Council would advertise for a Community Special Constable within the village, and the police would also advertise the position. If someone already qualified came forward then they could be in place within a few months, however it could potentially take a couple of years to get someone qualified otherwise.

### 25/111 Planning

- (a) The draft minutes from the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 were noted.
- (b) It was noted that decisions have been made on the following Planning Applications:
- |               |   |                            |
|---------------|---|----------------------------|
| <b>252508</b> | <b>The Rectory, Ivy Lodge Road</b>                | <b>Approve Conditional</b> |
|               | <i>Application for variation of condition 2</i>   |                            |
| <b>252544</b> | <b>7 Manor Close</b>                              | <b>Approve Conditional</b> |
|               | <i>First floor extension to existing bungalow</i> |                            |
- (c) Members discussed items for a S106 project list, as requested by Colchester City Council. **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to add additional solar panels and battery storage for the Village Hall to the list, and a new accessible path around the edge of the Jubilee Green and some outdoor gym equipment if these items are also eligible.
- (d) It was noted that the Clerk, in consultation with Cllr Sudbery, responded to the 'Rule 6' letter from the Examining Authority regarding the pylons proposal on behalf of the Parish Council as a registered interested party, to request that 'siting and/or choice of local routes for construction traffic' be added as a sub-issue to be discussed under 'Transport and Traffic' at the Preliminary Meeting. The Clerk will also request that consideration is given to having a site visit, preferably accompanied, to assist with the siting of the Eastern Sealing End Compound, the close proximity of the underground lines to residencies and listed properties and the impact and safety issues of the proposed route for construction traffic.
- (e) There were no reports of any other new urgent Planning matters.

### 25/112 Highways

- (a) Cllr Arnold reported on the Community Special Constable Scheme in item 25/110.
- (b) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to join the Community Special Constable Scheme and pursue advertising for a Community Special Constable for Great Horkesley parish. The Clerk will mention this in her next piece for the Village News.
- (c) Cllr Tempest will contact County Cllr Barber to find out what date the speed limit change for the A134 between Great Horkesley and Chesterwell was published (if it was). Cllr Tempest will also reiterate the Council's strong disappointment that this is taking so long.

### 25/113 Village Hall

- (a) Members discussed whether the Village Hall could be hired out for puppy training classes. **It was agreed** (Cllr Jarvis and Cllr Baker against, all other members agreed) to allow hirers to use the Village Hall for puppy training classes, subject to the following:

- Dogs may only enter the Village Hall for specified puppy training classes; terms and conditions for animals remain the same for all other hires.
  - The hire agreement will be terminated immediately if there appears to be any hygiene issues concerning these hires.
  - Any toileting accidents, dribble or any other mess must be cleaned up immediately and using appropriate disinfectant.
  - The floor must be properly cleaned by the hirer at the end of every session, to ensure all dog hair and any other dirt is removed.
  - NO animals may enter the kitchen area at any time.
- (b) It was noted that the local First Responder has sourced some new defibrillator pads at no cost and at the end of the month will be replacing the old pads that soon go out of date on the Village Hall defibrillator.
- (c) There were no reports of any urgent matters regarding the Village Hall.

#### **25/114 Jubilee Green**

- (a) Cllr Tempest reported that takeover of the Jubilee Green is unlikely to happen now before 1<sup>st</sup> April. The Clerk advised that the maintenance company have agreed to add cutting the Village Hall garden area to their list of duties for no additional charge. The Clerk also confirmed that she will send a letter to CCC confirming that the Parish Council is happy to enter into a deed with Fields in Trust, in order for the takeover process to move forward.
- (b) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to give the Jubilee Green Committee the authority to make any decisions on behalf of the Parish Council regarding the transfer of ownership of the Jubilee Green.
- (c) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) that the Parish Council will cover costs incurred in the transfer the ownership of the Jubilee Green to the Parish Council, including but not limited to those listed below, from Jubilee Green Ear-Marked Reserves:
- Approximately £1,175 solicitor costs
  - £500 vendor's legal contributions
  - £500 vendor's surveyor's contributions
  - £1,000 external valuation fee
  - £216.24 disposal notice

#### **25/115 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk's report to date, including a list of resolutions agreed at earlier Parish Council meetings and any progress to date, was noted.

#### **25/116 Village Warden**

The Village Warden's report to date was noted.

#### **25/117 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7.30pm in Great Horkesley New Village Hall.