

GREAT HORKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 18TH MARCH 2025
IN GREAT HORKESLEY NEW VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

Those present:

Cllr Arnold (Chairman)	Cllr Banks
Cllr Burns-Langton	Cllr Jarvis
Cllr Sudbury (arrived 7.35pm)	Cllr Tempest
Cllr Wescomb-Cross	

In attendance:

County Cllr Lewis Barber	Borough Cllr Darius Laws
	+ 5 members of the public

24/108 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and all members introduced themselves to members of the public present.

24/109 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllr Baker and Cllr Mead.

Cllr Sudbery joined the meeting.

24/110 Declaration of Interests

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

24/111 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st January 2025 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

24/112 Have Your Say – Public Open Forum

One member of the public, Sharon Burns, spoke about Colchester Council Watch and concerns over the number of 5G masts within the Colchester Master Plan. She regularly speaks to Cllr Laws and invited any members that would like to know more information to contact her.

One resident from Ivy Lodge Road expressed concern that the Council was not responding appropriately to the recent traffic survey results and Speedwatch reports of excessive speeds and the increasing size of vehicles that use the road. The Chairman pointed out that to avoid delay due to the ECC Local Highway Panel procedures, the Council had itself paid for the official survey to be carried out to verify the Speedwatch reports. This was discussed under item 24/115 (g).

24/113 Reports from Members and Officers of Other Authorities

Cllr Barber reported that the decision paper is now finally being drafted for reducing the speed limit along the section of the A134 between Great Horkesley and Chesterwell, and he has been asked for any supporting comments.

Cllr Laws reported that there are lots of exciting things happening in the city centre, including that National Lottery money will be used to fund the redevelopment of 'Jumbo' water tower. He also recently supported a motion for the leader of the Council to begin to develop relationships with Braintree and Tendring councils ahead of the introduction of unitary councils in Essex. It may be advantageous that Colchester is the only City within those districts.

Cllr Laws also urged members to encourage parishioners to report any crime. If it is not reported, the police do not know about it, and nothing can be done.

24/114 Finance

- (a) The Statement of Accounts as at 28th February 2025 was noted and Cllr Banks checked and signed to say that the balances reconciled with those on the February bank statements.
- (b) The January/February payments list was approved in accordance with 2024/25 Budget.
- (c) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Burns-Langton, seconded Cllr Sudbery) to purchase a new phone for the Village Hall Booking Manager up to a maximum cost of £190.
- (d) The Finance Committee had previously approved grants for village organisations as follows, for applications received for the 2025/26 financial year (F24/15):

1 st Great Horkesley Scout Group	£1,000
Great Horkesley Community Events	£500
Bishop William Ward School Association	£1,150
Great Horkesley Parochial Church Council	£1,000

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Burns-Langton) to release funds as listed above in April 2025.
- (e) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Burns-Langton, seconded Cllr Tempest) to purchase approximately 125 traffic cones for a cost of up to £500, as previously recommended by the Finance Committee (F24/15).

24/115 Planning & Highways

- (a) Cllr Sudbery moved that Planning Application 250366 be discussed under item 24/115 (b).
It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Sudbery) that the Planning Authority be informed that GHPC does not wish to comment on the remaining Planning Applications listed below.

250314	Hill Hall, Nevard Lane	(expires 19/03/25)
Retrospective application for an outbuilding to the rear garden		
250313	1 Breewood Cottage, School Lane	(expires 19/03/25)
Erection of rear extension, demolition of outhouse and erection of front wall		
250284	Tile House, Tile House Lane	(expires 25/03/25)
Replacement of render for Grade II Listed building		
250436	Store Rear of Coach Road Nursery	(expires 27/03/25)
Outline application for erection of two 4-bed detached dwellings		
- (b) Members considered the below Planning Application.

250366	Lodge Farm, Boxted Road	(expires 19/03/25)
Application to determine if prior approval is required		
Cllr Sudbery shared concerns that the stacks of boxes that will be placed on the new hardstanding area proposed in the application will be unsightly and visually intrusive.		
It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Sudbery, seconded Cllr Arnold) that GHPC comments on the application as follows:		

GHPC are concerned that the stacked boxes will be intrusive to the open countryside, so effective natural screening must be put in place to ensure that whatever is stacked on the hardstanding area is not visible from the A134 or the Essex Way.

- (c) It was noted that decisions have been made on the following Planning Applications:

241976	Homelea, The Crescent	Approve Conditional
Modification of existing conservatory to orangery		
242259	El Paraiso, Brick Kiln Lane	Approval Not Required
Proposed single storey rear extension		
242077	1 Breewood Cottage, School Lane	Refuse
Conversion of existing outhouse to habitable space		
242157	Honeysuckle Cottage, 4 Holly Lane	Refuse
Single storey porch roof and two storey rear and side extension		
242104	Wilpalm, Nayland Road	Approve Conditional
Brick wall to front and side boundary, with new permeable driveway		
250043	Maulete, 37 Coach Road	Approve Conditional
Replacement porch, alterations and rear extension		
242139	Meadow Barns, London Road	Approve Conditional
New stable		
250125	3 Keelers Way, Great Horkesley	Refuse
Proposed illuminated advert		

- (d) Cllr Arnold reported that he had contacted Hopkins Homes via their website to make initial contact regarding the land around Great Horkesley Manor as it is apparent that they will be carrying out the development and has had no response at all. He also wrote to Lucy Mondon at Colchester City Council, who confirmed that they had engaged with her a few months ago, but she has not heard from them since. She will get in touch with them again to see when the planning application should be going in.
- (e) Cllr Barber reported that members of Colchester Planning Committee voted to postpone the decision to put the Local Plan out to consultation, as there are currently too many uncertainties within it. For example, Highways have submitted evidence to show that for the current plan to be viable, car usage in the area needs to reduce by 50%. Previously, many millions of pounds of public and private money were spent on the proposed West Tey development, and it ended up with no houses being built because the correct planning process was not followed. The risk is that this will happen on a wider basis if the council does not do the work thoroughly at this point in the plan.

The Government has mandated that the number of houses Colchester must deliver before 2032 be increased by 40% (an additional 11,000 homes) and there is no discretion on those numbers. If the houses are not built, the Government will send people in to make sure they are. Cllr Laws reported that he still feels there is a chance to shape when and where houses in the area will be built, but we cannot stop it all together. He is urging councillors to think about building more houses within the city centre, rather than in rural neighbourhoods, and to build higher.

Cllr Arnold reported that he has had a conversation with CCC policy planning officer, Sandra Scott, who confirmed that the delay in putting the Local Plan out to consultation gives the Parish Council an opportunity to build a case against the Coach Road proposals and give an alternative option, between now and the Autumn. She has offered to meet with the group that want to take the Neighbourhood Plan forward.

- (f) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Wescomb-Cross) to form a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and empower the Clerk to appoint members to it. Cllr Arnold and Cllr Wescomb-Cross would like to be appointed, and Cllr Arnold stated that there are three residents that have also expressed an interest in joining the Working Group.

The Clerk has agreed to provide clerking services, which will be logged as overtime hours and paid at the Clerk's standard hourly rate.

- (g) The results from the recent traffic survey on Ivy Lodge Road were noted.
Cllr Barber will submit an application to Essex County Highways for them to come up with a proposal to show what action can be taken to reduce speeds in the area. The matter has also been referred to the police so that formal spot checks can be increased. Members stated that the width of the road is also an issue, and the Clerk confirmed that the overhanging hedge has been reported to Essex Highways.

It was agreed that the Council would support the action proposed by Cllr Barber.

- (h) The idea of putting a pedestrian refuge somewhere in the middle of the A134 near The Crescent had been mentioned during a previous meeting, to help residents in The Crescent area cross the road to reach all of the facilities in the village.

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Banks) to fund a traffic survey to be carried out on the A134 between the car garage and the Tile House Lane roundabout, drawing the money from reserves.

Cllr Barber will ask for all the mini roundabouts along the A134 between Blackbrook Road and School Lane to be repainted.

- (i) Cllr Jarvis reported that a resident wanted to attend meeting to express their concerns about the speed of traffic on Coach Road, particularly as it is near the primary school and lots of children live and walk along the footway.

Cllr Arnold reported that he has noticed an increase in the volume of vehicles using Coach Road. If the Parish Council wishes to build a case against the fields behind Coach Road being used for development, a traffic survey showing volumes of vehicles would be extremely useful.

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Burns-Langton) to fund a traffic survey to be carried out on Coach Road between the junction with the A134 and Malvern Way.

- (j) There were no reports of any other urgent planning or highways issues.

24/116 Village Hall

- (a) The draft minutes from the Village Hall Committee meeting held on 4th March 2025 were noted.
Cllr Burns-Langton reported that the fire exit doors in the hall are an urgent concern, and as money is set aside in the 2025/26 budget to replace them, they are looking at getting those replaced as soon as possible. The Committee is also looking into options for installing a new system to manage both air con and heating for the building.
- (b) Cllr Arnold asked a local resident if they would be willing to offer expertise to the Village Hall Committee regarding solar panels and they agreed to. The VH Committee will invite the resident to a meeting to discuss energy efficiency options.

- (c) Members discussed which capital projects could receive a potential community contribution from planning applications.

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Sudbery, seconded Cllr Arnold) to request that the £3,201.16 for Planning Application 220321, available now, be used towards purchasing more solar panels for the Village Hall.

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Sudbery, seconded Cllr Tempest) to request that the £5,331.36 for Planning Application 250436, which may be available in the future, be used towards new play equipment or a fitness trail or similar on the Jubilee Green.

- (d) There were no reports of any other urgent matters regarding the Village Hall.

24/117 Annual Parish Meeting & Annual Parish Council Meeting

It was agreed to move the Annual Parish Council Meeting 8th May 2025 and precede it with the Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm.

24/118 Public Spaces

- (a) Cllr Arnold reported that he and the Clerk had a meeting with CCC officers David Carter and Fiona Shipp, walking round the entire green. Colchester City Council are keen to transfer ownership to the Parish Council and suggested that an appropriate time to complete the transfer would be Autumn 2025 (when there would be no more maintenance costs such as grass cutting for the remainder of the financial year). Notes taken at the meeting will be shared with all members.
- (b) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Banks) to form a Jubilee Green Committee and empower the clerk to appoint members to it.
The Clerk will send round list of who is currently on what committee so everyone can decide if they would like to join an additional one.
- (c) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Burns-Langton) to approve the Terms of Reference for the Jubilee Green Committee that were circulated prior to the meeting.
- (d) Identifying relevant training courses was deferred to a Jubilee Green Committee meeting.

Cllr Sudbery left the meeting at 9.40pm.

- (e) Cllr Tempest reported that he had contact a few different grounds maintenance companies and had received just one quote for works, with some companies saying it was too big a job for them to take on. Likely costs would be around £10,000 per year (which matches the figures suggested at the meeting with CCC). Cllr Tempest will ask members of the Working Group to help gather quotes for play equipment in order to help plan the development of the space going forward.
- (f) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold, seconded Cllr Banks) to investigate the cost of replacing the climbing frame at the play area and whether CCC would allow the Parish Council to do so. **It was further agreed** to take money out of general reserves to repair the net before the Summer if possible, in anticipation for taking over ownership of the green later in the year. The Clerk will attempt to obtain some quotes to bring back for agreement at a future meeting.
- (g) Cllr Arnold reported that he has advised CCC and the PCC that the Council is not interested in taking on ownership of the St John's Church car park in the corner of the Jubilee Green.

24/119 Policies & Procedures

- (a) The FOI Publication Scheme was reviewed and approved.
- (b) The Privacy Notice was reviewed and approved.
- (c) The Privacy Notice (Staff & Councillors) was reviewed and approved.
- (d) Approving the Social Media & Electronic Communications Policy was deferred to next meeting.

24/120 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report to date was noted, including a list of resolutions agreed at earlier Parish Council meetings and any progress to date. Cllr Arnold has completed the item regarding notifying Anglian Water of flooding issues in the village, so this item will be discharged.

24/121 Village Warden

The Village Warden's report to date was noted.

24/122 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 29th April 2025 at 7.30pm in Great Horkesley New Village Hall.