



GREAT HORKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 21ST APRIL 2026
IN GREAT HORKESLEY NEW VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

Those present:

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

In attendance:

Cllr D Laws
+ 5 members of the public

25/140 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

25/141 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

All members were present.

25/142 Declaration of Interests

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

25/143 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17th March 2026 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

25/144 Have Your Say – Public Open Forum

Five residents attended the meeting to explain their concerns regarding Planning Application 260450 (Westwood Home Farm). This was discussed under agenda item 25/147 (a).

25/145 Reports from Members and Officers of Other Authorities

Cllr Sudbery reported that Colchester City Council has written to the Parish Council asking for details of what may be impacted by the construction of the pylons project through the village, that could be compensated for financially by National Grid. Cllr Arnold suggested that the A134 is currently a dangerous road for cyclists, so the footway could be widened and extended further north, to make it fit for pedestrians and cyclists to travel on safely.

The Chairman called a meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee to take place on Saturday 25th April at 9.00am, where this item will be discussed and agreed.

Cllr Laws reported that due to Local Government Reform many local projects are slipping. He has had no updates on the repainting of the mini roundabouts through the village or the A134 speed limit change. The replacement of the bridge over the Stour in the neighbouring village of Boxted continues to be problematic.

25/146 Finance

- (a) The Statement of Accounts as at 31st March 2026 was noted and Cllr Banks, who is not a bank signatory, checked and signed to say that balances reconcile with those on the March bank statements, and carried out a spot check of the bank reconciliation.
- (b) The March payments list was approved in accordance with the 2025/26 Budget.
- (c) The draft minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 13th April 2026, including that the End of Year Accounts for the 2025/26 financial year were reviewed and approved, were noted.
- (d) The following documents were approved, as reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee:
 - i. The Asset Register
 - ii. The Financial Regulations
 - iii. The Internal Control Procedures
- (e) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to update the Terms of Reference for all council committees to say that a meeting of the committee can be called by the Parish Council Chairman, in addition to the Clerk and Committee Chairman, if required.
- (f) The Clerk is still waiting to receive quotes from insurance companies, so this item was deferred.
- (g) The Clerk has contacted EALC to ask what services the parish council will receive if it subscribes with EALC next year, and whether it is possible to subscribe to NALC without also subscribing to EALC, but has not yet had a response, so this item was deferred.

25/147 Planning

- (a) Members discussed the following Planning Applications:

260450 Westwood Home Farm, London Road

Determining if prior approval is required for proposed change of use

The Chairman explained the nature of this type of application and allowed the residents in attendance to express their concerns.

After thorough discussion, **it was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to request that this conversion should not proceed under permitted development rights and that Colchester City Council should require that a formal planning application be submitted in order to gain control over the design and future use of the buildings, in order to minimise the impact on the local environment and the lives of nearby residents. The issues that the planning application should address are set out in the formal response to CCC, a copy of which is appended to these minutes.

It was also accepted that there is also good reason to believe that the work currently being carried out on site is not a genuine conversion of existing buildings and that the time elapsed since they were in agricultural use precludes development under permitted rights.

Residents also advised that noisy work has been carried out on the site most days, including at weekends. The Chairman advised residents to keep a diary of when there is noise and take the information to Environmental Health at Colchester City Council, independently of this application.

Members did not wish to comment on the following Planning Applications:

260452 1 London Cottages, School Lane

Single storey side and rear extension

260455 5 Pattinson Walk

Proposed garage conversion

260306 **The Retreat, London Road**
Installation of a fibre optic cable to a listed building

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

260245	Holly Nook, London Road	Refuse
	<i>Erection of a timber clad outbuilding</i>	
260228	Woodlands, Broad Lane	Approve Conditional
	<i>Structural repairs to barn</i>	

(c) Cllr Tempest circulated a document with a suggested theme for street names on the new Manor Land development related to Jane Taylor, writer of the poem Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, as she lived in Colchester and a new statue of her was recently unveiled in Colchester High Street.

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Tempest) to send these suggestions to Hopkins Homes for consideration.

(d) Cllr Arnold reported on a virtual meeting held with Sandra Scott and Simon Cairns from Colchester City Council's planning team, their subsequent email on 20th March and a follow up call. It has emerged from the consultation that took place last winter that some sites will not be suitable for development, so in a series of discussions the planners are exploring with parish councils whether there are alternatives that could be brought forward.

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Arnold) that the council would engage with CCC to determine whether a proposal advantageous to Great Horkesley could be included in the emerging Local Plan.

(e) There were no reports of any other new Planning matters.

25/148 Highways

(a) The Planning & Highways Committee will agree a response to the current Essex Safer Speeds Strategy consultation at the meeting on 25th April.

(b) There is no further update on the speed limit change on the A134. The Chairman has asked Cllr Barber to ensure that the Parish Council receives a bill before the end of June, so that his contribution is released.

(c) There were no reports of any other urgent matters regarding Highways.

25/149 Village Hall

(a) Cllr Burns-Langton had advised members prior to the meeting, that the concrete base around one of the benches on the Village Hall green area had been smashed, possibly in preparation to steal the bench itself. The Clerk will ask the Village Warden if he can repair it.

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

25/150 Jubilee Green & Public Spaces

The Clerk received an email earlier in the day stating that the covenant application to Fields in Trust has at last been accepted, so the transfer of ownership of the Jubilee Green from CCC can proceed. The matter is now with the parish council's solicitor, who has asked a number of questions about the draft Deed of Transfer which Cllr Arnold will answer.

25/151 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 Jarvis asked that an additional column be added to the document to show when the whole item is complete, rather than just the Clerk's actions.

25/152 Village Warden

The Village Warden's report to date was noted.

25/153 Councillor Roles & Responsibilities

Cllr Arnold asked members to think about the roles and responsibilities they would like to have for the forthcoming municipal year, including service on particular committees, and notify the Clerk. The Clerk will then identify potential gaps to be filled at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

25/154 Parish Communication

It was unanimously agreed that the following points from the meeting should be communicated to residents:

Approval of Fields in Trust application

Street names suggested for the new Manor Land development

Westwood Home Farm planning application

25/155 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 19th May 2026, following the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00pm in Great Horkesley New Village Hall.