



Village Hall
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Earls Colne
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Clerk to the Council: Sarah Gaeta
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**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL
ON TUESDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.00 PM**

Present:

Councillor R Cook (Chairman)
Councillor M Jackson (Vice Chairman)
Councillor L Bauckham-Leys
Councillor G Croker
Councillor R Dalton
Councillor C Dennis
Councillor V Faulks
Councillor W Lucking
Councillor I Sparks
Councillor P Wall
Clerk
8 members of the public

25/54. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Jemmett.

25/55. Minutes

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on 18th and 30th September 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

25/56. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Dennis declared a non-pecuniary interest for item 25/63 (a).

25/57. Essex County Councillor Update

Councillor Siddall sent his apologies.

25/58. Braintree District Councillor Update

Councillor Courtauld sent his apologies. Please see Appendix 1 for Councillor Spray's report.

25/59. Chairman's Update

Councillor Bob Cook's report included the following:

- Councillors Bauckham-Leys and Wall have made good progress updating health and safety documentation. Thanks to them both.
- Health and Safety contractor Worknest has advised that the current ride-on mower is not compliant for council use.
- Work continues to bring the refurbishment project back on track.

- Outstanding items from 2023/24 and 2024/25 audits will be resolved before the next audit cycle.
- Community Lottery funding has been applied for to fund a warm hub.
- All three public toilets are now open daily, with further maintenance work ongoing.

25/60. Public Participation session

Two members of the public raised the following:

- Background information on items 25/62 (c) and 25/64 (e) was provided and support given.

25/61. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report was received.

25/62. Finance and Internal Control

- It was resolved** to appoint Councillors Bauckham-Leys and Dalton as bank signatories.
- It was resolved** to grant permission to the RFO to set up Direct Debits for Ernest Doe and Sons (for purchases on account) and SSE (streetlighting electricity supply).
- It was resolved** to provide a discretionary grant of £500 to the Twinning Association and agree use of the Village Hall to assist and fund the twinning visit in 2026.
- It was resolved** to adopt the amended Standing Orders.

25/63. Planning

- 25/02254/FUL** – Conversion of existing public house into two residential units and erection of one new-build dwelling within the rear garden/parking area, with associated parking at The Castle Public House, 77 High Street. **Objection.** Recorded vote requested: In favour of objection: Councillors Bauckham-Leys, Cook, Faulks, Lucking, Jackson and Wall. Abstained: Councillors Croker, Dalton, Dennis and Sparks.
- 25/01933/FUL** – Erection of woodchip and log store, with storage for agricultural vehicle and machinery as well as office space at Land East of Coggeshall Road. **No objection.**
- 25/02219/FUL** – Installation of ground anchors to secure inflatable seasonal air dome with associated infrastructure and ancillary facilities at The Essex Golf and Leisure Club, The Airfield. **No objection.**
- 25/02258/FUL** – Retention of an extension to existing farm building at Land South of Claypits Farm, Coggeshall Road. **No objection.**

For details on individual submissions made by the Parish Council, see the Braintree District Council website: [Simple Search](#)

25/64. Village and Environment

- It was resolved** to appoint a Village Planting Committee. The Terms of Reference will be agreed at a later date.
- It was resolved** to fund the refurbishment of the telephone box on the large green, up to £300.
- It was resolved** to work with Earls Colne Heritage Museum to adopt the telephone box close to Drapers Hotel.
- It was resolved** to budget for the replacement of a streetlight column in Dudley Close for year 2026/27, once ownership is confirmed.
- It was resolved** to support the Earls Colne Heritage Museum project to create a waymarked history trail, subject to the relevant licenses and permissions being sought.

25/65. Health and Safety

An update on health and safety matters was received.

25/66. Village Hall

- The decision to identify the hall windows to be included in the replacement project was deferred.

- (b) **It was resolved** to hold the proposed Christmas events on 6th and 14th December with a net budget of £850. The school's PTA will be able to use the small hall free of charge for the event on 6th December.
- (c) The decision to place notices in relation to vehicles leaving their engines idling in the Village Hall car park was deferred.
- (d) **It was resolved** to form a working group to operate the Community Warm Hub, should the lottery funding be granted. Members confirmed as: Councillors, Cook, Dennis, Faulks and Wall, plus interested members of the public.
- (e) The decision to form a working group to investigate operating a 'Millwright's Café' was withdrawn by the proposer.

25/67. Accounts for Payment

It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment, as follows:

SSE	£694.45
Braintree District Council	£7,060.62
Seton	£49.22
Rentokil	£96.71
Royal British Legion	£45.00
Heritage Museum	£5,588.31
Colne Valley Windows	£2,492.40
EALC	£300.00
RCCE	£122.40
PKF Littlejohn	£804.00
P Wall (expenses)	£598.48
S Gaeta (expenses)	£6.95
Staff costs	£5,269.15
Direct Debits:	
British Gas	£183.16
Datapartners	£74.60
Amazon	£8.99
Daisy Communications	£62.36
Siemens Financial Services	£788.22
A&J Lighting	£264.00

25/68. General Information

Remembrance Sunday – a request for Councillors to attend.

25/69. Confidential Matters

- (a) Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 S.1(2), **it was resolved** to exclude members of the press and public for the duration of this meeting to consider the following confidential items.
- (b) **It was resolved** to support the nomination for a service recognition award.
- (c) **It was resolved** to appoint Sarah Gaeta as permanent Clerk and RFO.

Meeting closed at 9.47pm

Date of next Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday 18th November 2025

Appendix 1

REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS OCTOBER 2025

Local Plan: The final meeting to allocate sites in the draft Local Plan will be held on Monday 20th October. Three sites which were deferred from an earlier meeting, one in Coggeshall and two close to Braintree Town and Cressing will be discussed along with several Policy documents. Other Local Plan meetings to discuss Policies will follow before this early draft of the Plan moves to the Regulation 18 public consultation. The consultation is an opportunity for anyone to submit comments on the sites allocated and any Policy changes.

Waste Collection Changes: Following the Government's directive on waste collection, requiring local authorities to increase recycling rates and kerbside collections, Braintree Council continues to prepare residents for the changes which will come into effect in June 2026. All properties in the District have been assessed and a letter will be going out to all residents in November advising whether they will be on a Standard Collection i.e. an additional two new bins, one for paper & card and one for all other recyclables (glass, tins, drink cartons, plastics etc), or a Non-Standard Collection i.e stackable lidded boxes if there is no room for the additional bins. If a resident feels the Council has made a wrong decision there will be an opportunity to ask for a review. Included with the letter will be a calendar showing each household their weekly collection dates, types of collection etc for the new system. The new bins and boxes will start to be delivered from February 2026 up to May 2026, in time for the new system to start in June. All boxes and bins will have a large sticker on the lid saying "Do Not Use Until June 2026".

Open Space Improvements Update: Braintree's Planning Policy team has emailed all Town and Parish Councils regarding the annual update for the Potential Open Space Improvements (POSI) plan. This is a key document used by planning officers to identify local projects which could benefit from S106 money acquired through housing or commercial developments. It is important that the document is kept up to date; a response form is attached to the email and should be used to remove any projects already completed, correct errors in existing information and add new items for future consideration. The form needs to be returned by no later than 30th January 2026.

With best regards
Cllr Gabrielle Spray

Appendix 2

Councillor Oversight Roles

Oversight roles are intended to give individual councillors a focus area where they can support the Clerk, monitor developments and carry out relevant research or fact-finding, without holding delegated authority or individual responsibility – as all decisions and accountability remain with the full council.

Area	Councillors (who may be supported by interested members of the public)
Allotments	Cllr Lucking Cllr Wall
Car parks, toilets, EV chargers	Cllr Lucking Cllr Jackson Cllr Wall
Church clock	Cllr Cook Member of the public
Climate change, environmental initiatives	Cllr Faulks Cllr Jemmett
Community events, hall/bar	Cllr Bauckham-Leys* Cllr Faulks Cllr Jemmett Member of the public
Earls Colne Heritage Museum	Cllr Cook Cllr Lucking
Health and safety	Cllr Wall Cllr Bauckham-Leys* Cllr Lucking (IT support) Cllr Jackson
Highways, transport, footpaths	Cllr Sparks Cllr Dennis* Cllr Faulks (education/communication)
Local business liaison	Cllr Jemmett
Planning	Cllr Croker Cllr Dennis*
Open spaces and play areas	Cllr Dalton Cllr Dennis* Cllr Faulks Cllr Wall Member of the public
Tree warden	Cllr Dalton Member of the public
Village Hall (structure/facilities)	Cllr Croker Cllr Lucking
War memorial	Cllr Sparks

* Appointed following the co-option on 30th September 2025.

External Bodies

Braintree Association of Local Councils – Cllr Cook
Earls Colne Recreational Trust – Cllrs Cook and Jemmett
Earls Colne Twinning Association – Cllr Jackson
Greenway North Essex – Cllr Dalton
Halstead and Earls Colne Educational Trust – Cllr Faulks
Library – Cllr Cook
Millennium Green Trust – Cllr Faulks
Primary Parking Partnership – Cllr Sparks
Police liaison – Cllr Sparks