



Village Hall
York Road
Earls Colne
CO6 2RN

15th October 2026

To: Members of Earls Colne Parish Council,

You are hereby summoned to attend

**THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
TO BE HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL (LARGE HALL)
ON TUESDAY 20th OCTOBER 2026 AT 7.00 PM**

for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Sophie Blair-Wolker

Clerk to the Council

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
To receive apologies for absence and to agree whether the reasons given are accepted.
- 2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting** held on 15th September 2026 to be taken as read and signed as a correct record of decisions made by the Chairman.
- 3. Declarations of Interest (existence and nature)** with regards to items on the Agenda. Councillors are reminded that the code of conduct provides that should they have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter under discussion, they should speak only in the public session, then withdraw from the room and not seek to influence a decision about the matter.
- 4. Essex County Councillor (ECC) Update**
To receive an update from Cllr Rocha.
- 5. Braintree District Councillor (BDC) Update**
To receive an update from Cllr Spray.
- 6. National Highways Update**
To receive an update from Nigel Allsopp, Route Manager, Essex and Luke Doughty, Project Manager, Scheme Delivery, Essex
- 7. Public Participation session** with respect to items on the Agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.
- 8. Chairman's Update**
To receive an update from the Chairman.

9. Clerk's Update

To receive an update from the Clerk.

10. Planning

(a) To receive an update from the Planning Committee.

(b) To consider the following planning applications, and any others submitted between the date of this agenda and the meeting:

Application Ref	Site / Address	Proposal	Response Deadline
26/02032/FUL	Colne Valley Golf Club Station Road Earls Colne Essex CO6 2ER	Proposed Golfers accommodation & store room.	19th October 2026
26/02133/TPOCON	37B Park Lane Earls Colne Essex CO6 2RH	Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area - Removal of approximately 6 to 8 fir trees and the remaining redundant oak tree stump to facilitate boundary reinstatement works.	5th November 2026
26/02163/OUT	Land North East Station Road Earls Colne Essex	Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except for Access for the erection of up to 80 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and associated infrastructure and vehicular access point from Station Road.	21 st October 2026
26/02289/TPOCON	8 High Street Earls Colne Essex CO6 2PA	Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area - Plum tree request to reduce spread by 2 meters and height reduction by 2.5 meters.	16 th October 2026
26/02172/HH	58 Queens Road Earls Colne Essex CO6 2RS	Retention of conversion of garage, including an increase in height, to bedroom and en-suite and infill extensions to create a garden room and a frontage utility room.	19 th October 2026
26/02181/HH	The Old Red House 52 Park Lane Earls Colne Essex CO6 2RH	Replacement windows and external doors.	19 th October 2026
26/02237/DAC	50 Park Lane Earls Colne Essex CO6 2RH	Discharge of condition 3 (Method Statement) of 23/01118/HH	24 th November 2026
26/02206/TPO	91 High Street Earls Colne Essex CO6 2QX	Application to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order: 14/06 T1 - Eucalyptus to re-pollard back by 6 metres to previous cuts. Reason: due to the trees proximity to the house, also it is overhanging the public footpath	22 nd October 2026
26/02267/TPOCON	Grammar School House York Road Earls Colne Essex CO6 2RN	Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: 3 No. Apple trees - 1m crown reduction & a 1m clearance away from wall to remove all encroachment into neighbouring property.	13 th November 2026
26/02302/TPOCON	14 Lower Holt Street Earls Colne Essex CO6 2PH	Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Magnolia- Crown reduction by approximately 2m to improve shape	17 th November 2026

- (c) To consider the draft **Terms of Reference** for the Planning Working Group and resolve to approve the document, with any agreed amendments.
- (d) To consider the draft response to the **Regulation 19 consultation** on the Braintree District Local Plan and resolve whether to approve the response for submission to Braintree District Council before the consultation deadline of **6th November**.
- (e) **Further Actions**- To consider matters requiring progression and agree any necessary actions by the Working Group with the support of the Clerk.

11. Village Hall

- (a) To receive an **update on outstanding matters** related to the management of the Village Hall and related Facilities.
- (b) To consider the draft **Terms of Reference** for the VH Working Group and resolve to approve the document, with any agreed amendments.
- (c) To agree to the **Earls Colne Museum (ECHM)** hiring the small hall at the Village Hall during the renovations of the Museum, included associated costs.
- (d) **Further Actions**- To consider matters requiring progression and agree any necessary actions by the Working Group with the support of the Clerk.

12. Finance and Internal Controls

- (a) **To approve** the accounts for payment.
- (b) Subject to approval of the proposal under agenda item 11(c), **to consider and agree** the reallocation of £946 from the CCTV project budget to cover the associated costs.
- (c) To receive an update from the Council's **Internal Control Advisor**.

13. Highways and Facilities

- (a) To receive an update on completed work relating to highways and Council-managed facilities.
- (b) To consider the draft **Terms of Reference** for the HF Working Group and resolve to approve the document, subject to any agreed amendments.
- (c) **CCTV Project**- To consider and agree whether to suspend the CCTV project for the foreseeable future.
- (d) **Further Actions**- To consider matters requiring progression and agree any necessary actions by the Working Group with the support of the Clerk.

14. Village Environment

- (a) To receive an update on completed work relating to the Council-managed facilities.
- (b) To consider the draft **Terms of Reference** for the VE Working Group and resolve to approve the document, subject to any agreed amendments.
- (c) **Further Actions**- To consider matters requiring progression and agree any necessary actions by the Working Group with the support of the Clerk.

15. Section 106

- (a) To receive an update on any **recent applications submitted to Braintree District Council**.

- (b) To consider the draft **Terms of Reference** for the Section 106 Working Group and resolve to approve the document, subject to any agreed amendments.
- (c) **Further Actions-** To consider matters requiring progression and agree any necessary actions by the Working Group with the support of the Clerk.

16. **Community Engagement and Events**

- (a) To receive an update on completed work relating to Council communications and upcoming events.
- (b) To consider the draft **Terms of Reference** for the CE Working Group and resolve to approve the document, subject to any agreed amendments.
- (c) **Further Actions-** To consider matters requiring progression and agree any necessary actions by the Working Group with the support of the Clerk.

17. **St Andrew's Church Clock** – To receive an update on the clock strike mechanism repairs and **consider the quotation** of approximately £6,500 for refurbishment of the clock mechanism, including the previously agreed £1,250 for replacement operating wires, for consideration in the next financial year.

18. **General Information**

To receive any brief notices or reminders from Councillors or the Clerk. No decisions will be made under this item.

19. **Confidential Matters**

- (a) **Motion:** Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), the Parish Council to exclude members of the press and public for the duration of this meeting to consider the following confidential employment items.
- (b) **War Memorial-** To receive an update on the War Memorial and **consider the proposal** to install two name plaques in recognition of two former village residents, review the quotations and associated costs, and determine whether to proceed with the works.
- (c) **Earls Colne Museum-** To consider the request from Earls Colne Heritage Museum to formalise the transfer of ownership of the Museum's assets and artefacts to the charity, further to the Parish Council's letter of intent issued at the time the Museum's management transferred on 16th August 2024; with the intention of completing and signing the transfer document.



Meeting: Full Council
Date/Time: Tuesday 20th October @ 7pm
Location: Earls Colne Village Hall

Appendix Pack

Agenda Item	Report Title
2	Minutes of the meeting Tuesday 18 th September 2026, to be signed
4	Essex County Council Report- October 2026
5	Braintree District Council Report- October 2026, Cllr G Spray
8	Chairman's Report, Cllr I Sparks
9	Clerk's Report, Sophie Blair-Wolker
10(a)	Planning Committee Report, Cllr C Dennis, Vice-Chair
10(c)	Planning Working Group Draft Terms of Reference
10(d)	Regulation 19 Response Draft
11(a)	Village Hall Working Group Report
11(b)	Village Hall Working Group Draft Terms of Reference
11(c)	Earls Colne Museum Hire Request, Cllr I Sparks
12	Financial Budget Report
12	Monthly R&P Report
12(b)	Budget Relocation Request, Cllr I Sparks
12(c)	Internal Control Advisor Report- October 2026
13(a)	Highways and Facilities Working Group Report
13(b)	Highways and Facilities Working Group Draft Terms of Reference
14(b)	Village Environment Working Group Draft Terms of Reference
15(b)	Section 106 Working Group Draft Terms of Reference
16(b)	Community Engagement and Events Draft Terms of Reference
17	Clock Improvement and Budget Request, Cllr B Cook



**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL (LARGE HALL)
ON TUESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7.00 PM**

In attendance:

Cllr Ian Sparks (Chair)
Cllr Catherine Dennis (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Martyn Jackson
Cllr Barry Latham
Cllr Bob Cook
Cllr Laurence Hull
Sophie Blair-Wolker, Clerk & RFO
Cllr Isi Rocha, Essex County Council
Cllr George Courtald, Braintree District Council
Members of the Public- 9

26/86. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Carol Lewis and Cllr June Jemmett, both of which were accepted.

26/87. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2026 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

26/88. Declarations of Interest (existence and nature)

There were no declarations of interest with regards to items on the agenda.

26/89. Essex County Councillor (ECC) Update

Councillor Isi Rocha provided an update to the Council on matters relating to issues of relevance to the local area.

Braintree District Local Plan

Councillor Rocha raised concerns regarding the ongoing Braintree District Local Plan process, including changes to the proposals and the extension of the plan period to 2043. She questioned the change in timescale from that presented during the public consultation and highlighted the potential impact of subsequent amendments, including an increase of approximately 2,000 homes compared with the proposals previously consulted upon.

Councillor Rocha reported that she was seeking clarification from Braintree District Council regarding the evidence supporting the revised proposals. She referred specifically to the Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR), which forms part of the Local Plan evidence base and assesses the potential effects of the proposed development and policies.

Councillor Rocha advised that she had been unable to locate the updated sustainability evidence and had raised the matter with the Planning Inspectorate. The importance of the relevant evidence being available for consideration as part of the Local Plan examination process was highlighted.

Highways

Councillor Rocha provided an update on highways matters across Essex. She reported that the number of pothole repair teams had been increased and that Braintree District had approximately 80,000 outstanding road defects, of which around 30,000 were potholes. It was acknowledged that progress may not be immediately apparent given the volume of outstanding defects, although repair work was ongoing. Concerns were raised by the Council regarding the number of roadworks taking place and the disruption caused to residents. Councillor Rocha advised that she was raising these concerns with Councillor Mark Webster and would continue to pursue the matters raised.

Local Government Reorganisation and Council Finances

Councillor Rocha provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the financial position of Essex County Council. She reported that consideration was being given to Council Tax expenditure and spending across a range of service areas. This included a review of contracts and significant areas of expenditure, including adult and children's social care.

The Essex Pension Fund was also discussed. Councillor Rocha highlighted the importance of transparency and visibility regarding the Fund. It was suggested that Councillor Bray be invited to attend a future Parish Council meeting to provide an update and respond to questions.

Councillor Casework

Councillor Rocha reported that she continued to receive a high volume of casework from residents, covering a range of matters requiring liaison with different authorities and services, including waste and bin collections, planning, anti-social behaviour and street signage.

She highlighted the challenges involved in identifying the appropriate services and officers within the County Council, given the range of services and organisational structure. Councillor Rocha reaffirmed her commitment to supporting the division, including Parish Councils, and highlighted the importance of residents having access to accurate and up-to-date information on matters affecting them at parish, district and county level.

26/90. Braintree District Councillor (BDC) Update

Councillor Courtauld was in attendance and provided an update on the following matters.

Braintree District Local Plan

Councillor Courtauld acknowledged the concerns raised by Councillor Rocha regarding the Braintree District Local Plan and provided an update from the District Council's perspective.

He referred to the housing requirements set by Central Government and advised that the District Council was required to progress its Local Plan in response to these requirements. He explained that the timing of the process had been affected by a number of factors, including elections, but stated that the Council was seeking to progress the work.

Councillor Courtauld anticipated that further changes to the Local Plan could arise as the process progressed and advised that further updates would be provided in due course.

Local Government Reorganisation

Councillor Courtauld described Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) as a significant issue for Braintree District Council and acknowledged the uncertainty and disruption arising from the process. He reported that the Government had withdrawn its previous decision regarding LGR in Essex and announced a review of the programme, creating further uncertainty for councils that had undertaken preparatory work. Councillor Courtauld stated that, in his view, Braintree District Council had operated efficiently and maintained balanced budgets. He acknowledged complaints regarding some services, including bin collections, and recognised the work of the Council's Operations Manager and staff involved in service delivery.

Halstead & Earls Colne Educational Charity

Cllr Courtauld advised that funding is available through the Charity and encouraged parishioners to raise awareness of the grants available. Although the Charity has made several awards, it receives relatively few applications. Parishioners were encouraged to signpost eligible learners who may benefit from the funding.

26/91. Public Participation session

- A parishioner asked whether the Tree Planting Grant could be used to help address the loss of natural habitat resulting from the removal of trees along Hobbs Way. The Chair advised that this could be considered following the appointment of a new Tree Warden.
- A resident of Hobbs Way asked about potential plans for Mary Gee Green. The resident stated that local residents wished to retain the green in its current form, with the exception of waste bins, and raised concerns regarding potential anti-social behaviour.
- A parishioner referred to previous correspondence regarding the potential loss of hedgerow habitat at the site. This was noted.
- A parishioner thanked the Council for following up on the road markings along Park Lane and asked that the replacement of the village Christmas lights also be followed up.
- A parishioner raised concerns regarding the village allotments and the condition of the fencing. It was noted that the existing agreement places responsibility for fence maintenance with the Parish Council, although the Allotment Group had previously been advised that it would need to meet the cost of repairs. It was noted and further investigation would be sought.

26/92. Chairman's Update

The Chair's report was noted.

Councillor Sparks referred to the current number of vacancies on the Parish Council following a number of Councillor resignations and encouraged residents who may be interested in becoming Councillors to contact the Council. Councillor Sparks thanked the outgoing Clerk for her work with the Council and welcomed the current Assistant (Acting) Clerk to her new role, following Sarah's departure.

26/93. Clerk's Update

The Clerk's report was noted.

26/94. Finance and Internal Control

(a) It was resolved that Councillor Sparks be appointed as the third bank signatory.

(b) It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment as follows-

Staff Salaries	5155.05
HMRC	1994.79
Essex Pension Fund	1073.32
British Gas	148.51
Apogee	299.40
RCCE	48.00
Sundries	313.64
Playsource	96.00
Datapartners	74.60
Olivers Plants	49.44
The Computer Centre	1579.68
Yu Energy	33.94
PKF Little John	1008.00
Essex Supplies	136.42
Daisy Communications	79.97

Harper Office	67.54
R. Cook (Expenses)	481.79

(c) The Conclusion of Audit for 2025/26 **was noted**. It was advised that Cllr Lynham continues to review the Council's processes in his role as Internal Audit Advisor, focusing on specific areas on a monthly basis.

26/95. Council Operations

(a) **It was resolved** to adopt the revised Working Group structure.

(b) The membership of each Working Group **was discussed and agreed as follows-**

- **Village Hall Working Group-** Cllr Cook, Cllr Jackson and Cllr Latham;
- **Village Environment Working Group-** Cllr Dennis, Cllr Jemmett, Cllr Latham, Cllr Hull and Cllr Lewis;
- **Highways and Facilities Working Group-** Cllr Sparks, Cllr Dennis and Cllr Jackson;
- **Community Engagement and Events Working Group-** Cllr Sparks, Cllr Jemmett and Cllr Lewis;
- **Section 106 Working Group-** Cllr Sparks, Cllr Jemmett and Cllr Dennis.

An amendment to the proposal was raised by Cllr Cat Dennis to introduce a Planning Working Group. This was seconded by Cllr Cook. **All in favour. Members include-** Cllr Dennis and Cllr Hull.

(c) **It was resolved** that non-Councillors may be invited to participate in Working Groups on an ad-hoc basis where the Council considers their involvement would be beneficial to a particular task or project.

(d) **It was resolved** to approve the subscription to Parish Online to support the Council's asset management, inspection, maintenance and record-keeping arrangements.

26/96. Planning

(a) The following planning applications, submitted between the publication of the agenda and the date of the meeting, were reviewed:

(i) 26/01945/TPOCON

Address: Thatched Cottages, Halstead Road, Earls Colne, Essex CO6 2NF

Description: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Lime (T1) – pollard the tree to 8–9m in height. Lime (T2) – pollard the tree to 8–9m in height. **Decision:** No objections.

(i) 26/01859/ADV

Address: The Lion PH, 9–11 High Street, Earls Colne, Essex CO6 2PA

Description: Signage to include: 1 externally illuminated hanging sign, 1 externally illuminated fascia sign, 3 non-illuminated handwritten signs and 1 non-illuminated mural. **Decision:** No objections.

(ii) 26/01841/LBC

Address: The Lion PH, 9–11 High Street, Earls Colne, Essex CO6 2PA

Description: Proposed change of external wall colour and installation of new lighting and signage. **Decision:** No objections.

(iii) 26/01863/DD

Address: 31 Halstead Road, Earls Colne, Essex CO6 2NL

Description: Notice of intent to carry out works under the dead or dangerous exemption – T1 Elm of TPO7/05 – remove dead Elm.

Decision: No objections raised; work to commence.

(iv) 26/01618/TPOCON

Address: Car Park, Willow Tree Way, Earls Colne, Essex

Description: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Cherry Tree – crown reduction by 3m and crown thin by 30%.

Decision: No objections raised; work to commence.

(v) 26/01534/HH

Address: 42 Coggeshall Road, Earls Colne, Essex CO6 2JP

Description: Proposed single-storey rear extension, removal of existing chimneys, and installation of two rear rooflights.

Status: Application granted.

To find further information about applications and their progress, see: [Simple Search](#)

- (a) Parish Council's proposed response to Braintree District Council's Local Plan Review in respect of the proposed sites EARL2119E1 and EARL2119E2- Cllr Dennis advised that Braintree District Council (BDC) was no longer recommending either site EARL2119E1 or EARL2119E2, both located south of Halstead Road, Earls Colne, for allocation in the Regulation 19 Local Plan. Site E1 was not recommended due to highways and landscape concerns, while site E2 was not recommended on the basis that additional housing in Earls Colne was not considered appropriate. Therefore, **this agenda item was withdrawn.**
- (b) **It was resolved** to undertake a targeted health check of the Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it remains fit for purpose in light of the emerging Braintree District Local Plan Review.

Full details of the targeted health check can be found in Appendix 1.

26/97. Highways

It was noted that the outstanding actions from the previous meeting had been raised with Essex County Council (ECC), and responses were awaited.

A query was raised regarding abandoned vehicles at Queens Road Car Park. Cllr Sparks reported that action was being taken to identify the owners of the vehicles and arrange for their removal where necessary. Advice was provided on checking vehicle MOT and insurance status via GOV.UK and reporting unidentifiable vehicles to Braintree District Council (BDC) for investigation and appropriate action.

26/98. Village Environment

- (a) The recent resignation of the current Earls Colne Tree Warden was noted. **It was resolved** to appointment Cllr Bob Cook as the new Earls Colne Tree Warden.
- (b) The appointment protocol for the Earls Colne Tree Warden **was considered and agreed.**
- (c) To consider and agree that the village litter bins require upgrading and/or replacement, and that research be undertaken to establish land ownership and whether responsibility for the bins rests with the Council, BDC or ECC- **This item was deferred until the next meeting.**

26/99. Section 106

- (a) To receive an update on the Mary Gee Green Project- It was noted that the current land owners were in the process of closing the gap in the fence where the boundary sits with the adjoining private land. Once this matter had been resolved, the land transfer process with HM Land Registry could be progressed. More updates will be shared in due course.

26/100. Village Hall

- (a) An update on village hall matters was received.
- (b) To consider and agree to the Earls Colne Heritage Museum's request to hire the Small Hall during the period of the Museum's renovation works, with the Parish Council covering the cost of the associated hire charges. **This item was deferred until the next meeting.**

26/101. General Information

Microphones and PA system

Feedback from parishioners was noted and acknowledged. It was understood that the use of the microphones and PA system was considered an improvement, however parishioners with hearing loss highlighted the need for Councillors to continue speaking clearly and enunciating. Further improvements are ongoing.

Parishioner enquiries and website information

It was reported that the Council receives a significant number of emails and telephone calls regarding matters outside its remit. The importance of signposting residents to the appropriate organisations was noted, alongside the intention to improve the information available on the Council's website to assist parishioners with their enquiries.

26/102. Private & Confidential

- (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 employment items.
- (b) The quotes received for upgrading the Village Hall's main circuit board to ensure compliance with the incoming regulations were considered, **and it was agreed** to appoint a contractor to undertake the works.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Appendix

1. Neighbourhood Plan Health Check Consideration 2026- Author: Cllr Cat Dennis

REPORT FOR THE COLNES PARISH COUNCILS OCTOBER 2026

LOCAL PLAN: An Extraordinary meeting of BDC's Full Council was held on 21st September with one item on the agenda: to ask Council to approve the draft Local Plan to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation. I presented the report and update on the Plan's progress, and I am pleased to say that, following Council's vote to move forward, the 6-week Reg 19 public consultation started on 23rd September. This is the final opportunity for residents to comment on the Local Plan before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by 31st December. Regulation 19 differs from previous consultations in that it is about whether the Council has followed due process in producing the Plan, has consulted correctly with all parties and is the Plan 'sound'. It is not an opportunity to comment on specific sites or introduce new sites. I would encourage all residents with an interest in how our District develops up to 2043 to look at the Plan and add a comment on the 'soundness' of the Plan. There is advice as to how to do this, and plenty of information, on the BDC website <https://www.braintree.gov.uk> All comments will be sent directly to the Planning Inspectorate together with the draft Plan, in time for the examination by an independent Inspector in 2027.

ENFORCEMENT PLAN: An updated version of the Enforcement Plan was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 28th September. This document clearly sets out what Planning Enforcement is, how it may be applied and the steps taken by Officers when a breach of planning is reported. A copy of the Enforcement plan can be found on the Council's website and I believe it will be of great help in explaining what can be a complex subject.

CLIMATE CHANGE: On 7th October I attended the Peoples' Emergency Briefing at St Andrew's Church in Earls Colne. There was a great turnout of about 100 people to watch the film, presented by Chris Packham, showing how climate change is affecting our country and way of life. Following the film, there was a Q and A session with four panel members, one of whom was my Cabinet colleague Cllr Peter Schwier who has considerable experience of environmental matters. This was a very informative evening with, I might add, a wake-up call for us all on how the extremes of weather we witnessed this summer with drought, wildfires and floods can affect all of us.

BUDGETS: It is that time of year when all Councils, whether Parish, District or County, start the serious discussions on their budgets for 2026/27. As always, there will be some difficult decisions to be made but Braintree District Council will make every effort to support our residents as much as possible whilst remaining a financially responsible authority.

District Councillors Grant: One piece of good news is that the Councillors Grant Fund for this year has been given a boost and a further £1500 is available for local projects. This only applies if the first £1500 has been fully allocated and it needs to be spent by end of February 2027. As my first grant fund has already been spent, this means I have another £1500 to give away. Please email me with any proposals! cllr.gspray@braintree.gov.uk

Best regards

Gabrielle

Cllr Gabrielle Spray

The Colnes Ward

October Chairmans Report

Start this month with our transition re the Clerk. On the 7th of the month, Sarah left us and on the next day Sophie moved into position. I've said before that the transition would be easy and it was without hardly any hiccups. We now get down to a new era of work alongside Sophie who I know has several new and different ideas on how to make the Parish Council better, some may be good and can be implemented but of course there are always those ideas that don't mesh into the system so we'll see.

There was a good lively debate at the Planning Committee meeting, documents to be placed on the website soon. The one niggle was the continuous interruption of the Council debate by members of the public after the Public Speaking section had finished. The Standing Order was explained, but as usual some members of the public either don't listen or will just ignore the Orders. I reiterate that after the Public section has finished, the public are not allowed to try and join in the Council debate session at all. If members of the public persist in this interruption, they face the request to stop and if they fail to do so can be asked to leave the meeting. Failure to accept that may result in the meeting being suspended to the detriment of these members of the public who have complied and wishing to hear the debates. I would ask that those who do try and butt in adhere to those Standing Orders for everyone's sake.

The Working Groups are taking place and soon we shall start to see their endeavours occur.

Ian Sparks Chairman



Clerks Report

Title	September/October 2026
Date of Meeting	Agenda Item No.
20 th October 2026	Item 11
Published by:	Sophie Blair-Wolker, Assistant Clerk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the work undertaken by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) since taking up the position, including the handover from the previous Clerk, current operational responsibilities, ongoing projects and improvements to the Council's administrative processes.

The report highlights progress made, identifies current priorities and outlines areas where further work, Member engagement or consideration by the Council may be required. It also seeks to promote a collaborative approach to progressing the Council's objectives, improving operational efficiency and strengthening communication with both Members and residents.

Clerk's Handover and Administration

Since taking up the position as Clerk and RFO, a significant amount of time has been dedicated to the handover from the previous Clerk, Sarah, to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Council's existing procedures, systems and operational responsibilities.

The handover has covered a wide range of areas, including financial management, staffing and employment matters, asset management, Village Hall administration, bookings, general administration and the various software systems used by the Council.

Due to the breadth of the Council's activities and the number of existing processes to familiarise myself with, this has been a substantial undertaking. However, this work has been important in ensuring continuity, identifying current priorities and establishing a clear understanding of the Council's operational requirements.

I am now feeling increasingly confident in the systems and procedures in place and in my ability to manage these responsibilities effectively going forward. My focus will be on ensuring that the Council's administrative arrangements remain organised, compliant and efficient, while identifying opportunities to improve existing processes where appropriate.



Clerks Report

Finance and Budget Monitoring

The Finance Committee meeting has been unable to proceed on two occasions due to the meeting not being quorate. Consequently, I have undertaken a budget review in my capacity as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to ensure that the Council continues to have oversight of its financial position.

A budget update has been prepared and will be presented under agenda item 14. This will provide Members with an opportunity to review expenditure against the approved budget, consider the Council's current financial position and identify any areas requiring further monitoring or action.

Regular financial monitoring remains important, particularly as the Council progresses its planned maintenance works, asset improvements and other projects.

The Council will need to ensure that appropriate financial oversight continues through its Finance Committee.

Village Hall Management

I have been liaising regularly with the Village Hall team to establish the outstanding maintenance requirements, identify priorities and determine the resources needed to complete the necessary works.

An action plan containing more than 80 individual items has been developed. This has involved assessing the nature and scale of the work required, identifying which tasks may be undertaken by the Council's Community Workers or existing staff, and determining where specialist external contractors may be necessary.

Grant Funding for the Village Hall- A key priority is to establish how the remaining grant funding referenced under agenda item 13 can be utilised. The Council has been advised that the funding is restricted to the replacement of windows and doors.

Further work is therefore required to identify eligible works, obtain costs where necessary and ensure that any proposed expenditure meets the grant conditions. This is a priority for the Village Hall, and I will continue to investigate the available options so that the Council can determine the most appropriate way forward.

Fire risk assessment- The recent fire safety assessment has been received and reviewed. An action plan is being developed to identify the measures required,



Clerks Report

establish priorities and determine the appropriate arrangements for completing the outstanding actions.

Health and safety assessment- The health and safety report has also been received and reviewed, and an action plan has been prepared to record the actions arising from the assessment.

These actions will need to be prioritised and monitored, with responsibilities allocated and appropriate arrangements made for completing the work.

Village Hall Bookings and Administrative Processes- I have been reviewing the existing Village Hall booking process, including how members of the public enquire about availability, make bookings and complete the necessary administration.

With further improvements and renovations to the Village Hall anticipated, it is reasonable to expect that demand for bookings may increase further. It is therefore important that the Council has a booking process capable of accommodating this growth without placing an unsustainable administrative burden on the Clerk.

I am exploring options to streamline the process, including introducing more automated arrangements where practical. The intention is to trial an improved system, assess its effectiveness and identify any further changes required.

In the longer term, the Council may also need to consider its staffing capacity. If the Council intends to progress additional projects and expand its activities over the coming year, it will be important to ensure that sufficient administrative support is available. Depending on the success of the proposed booking improvements and the Council's future workload, the need for additional office support may need to be considered.

Parish Council Website

I have commenced work on developing the Council's new website using WordPress.

An administration fee of £75 plus VAT has been paid to obtain access to the WordPress software and facilities. This is a one-off cost, spread over our monthly payments for access to the software, subject to any separate hosting, domain or other service charges that apply.



Clerks Report

The development work will focus on improving the accessibility and presentation of Council information, making it easier for residents to find relevant documents, meeting information, updates and other useful resources.

The website survey has also provided feedback from residents about the existing website and the improvements they would like to see.

Website Survey Results-

Community and Engagement

Facebook- I have taken a more active approach to the Council's Facebook page, recognising that this is an important channel through which the Council communicates with residents.

The aim is to improve the frequency, clarity and accessibility of updates about Council meetings, decisions, projects, planning matters and other local issues.

This will help residents remain informed about the Council's work, understand matters being considered and know where they can access further information.

The development of the website and the increased use of Facebook are intended to complement one another, providing residents with timely updates through social media and a central location for official Council information and documents.

I will continue to review how the Council communicates with residents to ensure that information is accessible, relevant and consistent with the Council's communications arrangements.

Communication between the Clerk and Members- I am currently reviewing the most effective way for the Clerk to communicate with Members and ensure that information is shared consistently across the Council.

A WhatsApp group had previously been established; however, I felt that it was not being utilised as effectively as intended for Council business. I have therefore decided to use email as the primary method of communication to ensure that information, instructions and updates are recorded and can be referred back to when required.

This approach will provide a clearer record of communications and help ensure that important information is not lost among informal conversations.



Clerks Report

Microsoft SharePoint and document management- I have also been exploring the use of Microsoft SharePoint as a central location for Council documents and project information. The intention is to establish dedicated folders for each working group, accessible to Members from their computers or mobile devices.

These folders would provide a central point of reference for:

- Current projects and proposed improvements to the Council's facilities and assets.
- Background information and documents relevant to each working group.
- Progress updates and agreed next steps.
- Live action plans that can be updated collaboratively by authorised Members.
- Relevant reports, quotations and supporting information.

The aim is to ensure that Members have access to the most up-to-date information, improve collaboration between meetings and reduce the need to circulate multiple versions of documents by email.

Appropriate access permissions and document management arrangements will be required to ensure that information is shared securely, particularly where confidential or personal information is involved, and that official Council records are maintained.

Working groups and committee attendance- The volume of business currently being considered at Full Council is considerable, as reflected in the length of the meeting agendas. This places pressure on the time available for detailed discussion, research and the development of proposals.

Where matters require a formal Council decision, they must continue to be presented to the appropriate committee or Full Council in accordance with the Council's Terms of Reference, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation.

However, matters that primarily require investigation, discussion, the development of options or the preparation of recommendations are advised be progressed through the relevant working groups before being brought to Council for consideration.

The Village Hall team provides a useful example of how regular meetings, ongoing communication and collaboration can help identify issues and progress work between formal Council meetings.



Clerks Report

Regular attendance and participation by Members in their allocated committees and working groups are important to the success of this approach. It enables work to be progressed between Full Council meetings, ensures that Members contribute to the development of proposals and helps the Clerk implement agreed decisions efficiently.

I would therefore encourage Members to consider how they can support their respective working groups and contribute to the effective progression of the Council's agreed priorities.

Priorities Going Forward

- Continue embedding the Council's financial, administrative and operational procedures following the handover.
- Maintain regular budget monitoring and provide Members with clear financial information.
- Progress the Village Hall action plan, ensuring that maintenance, fire safety, health and safety actions are appropriately prioritised.
- Review and improve the Village Hall booking process, with the aim of reducing administrative workload and accommodating increased demand.
- Continue developing the Council's website, taking account of feedback received through the resident survey.
- Improve communication with residents through the website and Facebook.
- Establish a consistent approach to communication between the Clerk and Members.
- Develop a SharePoint structure for all working groups to improve document management, access to information and collaborative action planning.
- Encourage regular attendance and active participation in committees and working groups.
- Support the development of proposals through working groups so that Full Council agendas can focus on matters requiring formal consideration and decisions.
- Monitor the Council's administrative workload and identify whether additional staffing support may be required as the Council's projects and responsibilities develop.



Clerks Report

Planning Committee Report – October 2026

The Planning Committee met on the 9th October to consider the Station Road and Golf Club applications.

We presented the evidence for each application, drawing on the submitted plans, technical reports, consultation responses and residents' representations.

The presentations covered the proposals, their potential benefits, the concerns raised and the matters which remained unresolved.

The Committee then discussed each application and agreed the Parish Council's response.

Station Road – 26/02163/OUT

Committee decision: OBJECT

Main reasons:

1. **Harm to landscape and village character**
2. **Harm to the conservation area's setting**
3. **Adverse visual effects**
4. **Conflict with the settlement boundary policy**
5. **Wider traffic and cumulative impacts, including the historic forecast that the Church Hill mini-roundabout would be over capacity by 2033.**
6. **Pedestrian safety at the proposed informal crossing, with recorded speeds around 37mph.**
7. **Conflicting biodiversity-loss figures and unsecured details of off-site provision.**
8. **Sewage treatment capacity, surface-water drainage and maintenance arrangements.**
9. **Education and healthcare capacity, and noise from Riverside Business Park.**

Golf Club - 26/02032/FUL

Committee decision: Object

Main reasons:

1. **Privacy and outlook**
2. **Evening and night-time disturbance**
3. **Guest access and management**
4. **Parking capacity**

We also sought clarification on surface-water and foul drainage, club-specific demand and business viability.

Public Consultation Updates

Residents should be made aware that the neighbourhood consultation deadline for the Station Road application, 26/02163/OUT, is now the **21st October 2026**.

The Castle application is also being reconsulted on following the submission of revised drawings. Its neighbourhood consultation closes on the **27th October 2026**.

The Castle application is still appearing under the week commencing the 6th July 2026, so residents looking only at the latest weekly application lists may miss the opportunity to comment on the revised drawings.

Residents wishing to comment should review the latest documents and submit their representations directly to Braintree District Council before the relevant deadline.



EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL Terms of Reference – Planning Working Group

Purpose

The Planning Working Group (“the Working Group”) is established by Earls Colne Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) to support the timely and proportionate consideration of planning applications referred to the Parish Council by Braintree District Council.

The Working Group will primarily consider minor residential and tree applications, including applications relating to single residential properties, extensions, alterations and tree works.

The Working Group will work alongside the Clerk and Planning Committee to ensure that planning applications are properly considered and that the Parish Council is able to respond within the relevant consultation deadline.

Objectives

The objectives of the Working Group are to:

- review minor residential and tree applications referred to the Parish Council by Braintree District Council;
- identify relevant planning considerations, including local circumstances and material planning considerations where appropriate;
- consider the potential implications of applications for the parish and its residents;
- prepare clear recommendations or proposed responses for consideration through the Parish Council's agreed planning procedure;
- support the Clerk in dealing with applications where the consultation deadline falls before the next scheduled Parish Council meeting, where the Council's agreed delegated procedure applies;
- identify applications which should be referred to the Planning Committee because of their size, complexity, significance or contentious nature; and
- monitor relevant planning matters and report significant issues or changes to the Parish Council.

Status

The Working Group is an advisory working group of the Parish Council.

It has no independent delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, incur expenditure, enter into contracts, hold funds or commit the Parish Council to any course of action unless specific authority has been formally delegated.

The Working Group will make recommendations to the appropriate decision-making body or, where the Council's agreed delegated procedure applies, provide its recommendation to the Clerk for the Clerk to determine and submit the Parish Council's response in accordance with that delegation.

Where an application is considered controversial, members disagree with the proposed response, or the application falls outside the scope of the Working Group, it should be referred to the Planning Committee.

Membership

The Working Group shall consist of Parish Councillors appointed by the Working Group.

The Parish Council may appoint non-councillor members to the Working Group where their knowledge or expertise would assist the work of the Group.

The Parish Council may appoint or remove members of the Working Group at any time.

Lead Member

The Lead Member of the Working Group shall be appointed by the Working Group.

The Lead Member will help coordinate the work of the Working Group and liaise with the Clerk where required.

The Clerk to the Parish Council shall provide administrative and professional support to the Working Group.

The Lead Member does not have independent authority to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council.

Quorum

As the Working Group is advisory only, no formal quorum is required.

Where practicable, recommendations should reflect a clear consensus of those members participating in the consideration of an application.

Where members are unable to reach a clear recommendation, or there is significant disagreement, the application should be referred to the Planning Committee.

Meetings

The Working Group shall meet as required to progress its work and to ensure that planning applications can be considered within the relevant consultation deadlines.

Meetings may be informal and are not subject to the formal notice and public access requirements applicable to meetings of the Parish Council or a formal committee.

The Working Group may consider applications through other appropriate means, including correspondence between members, where this enables the Council to respond within the consultation deadline.

Brief notes or records of the Working Group's consideration should be kept where appropriate, particularly where a recommendation is made to the Clerk under the Council's delegated procedure.

Remit

The Working Group will:

1. Review planning applications referred to it by the Clerk.
2. Consider the relevant plans, supporting documents and information available through Braintree District Council's (BDC) planning portal.
3. Consider the planning merits of each application and any material planning considerations.
4. Consider relevant planning policies, including the Braintree District Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other relevant adopted planning policies.
5. Consider representations received by the Parish Council where these are relevant to the consultation.
6. Identify any potential issues requiring further investigation or clarification.
7. Agree a proposed Parish Council response or recommendation.
8. Refer applications to the Planning Committee where appropriate.
9. Assist the Clerk in ensuring that responses are submitted within the consultation deadline.

Financial Matters

The Working Group may make recommendations regarding expenditure associated with planning-related work undertaken by the Working Group, including any expenditure requiring Parish Council approval.

No expenditure may be incurred without prior approval by the Parish Council unless specifically authorised by a resolution of the Council or under the Clerk's delegated authority where applicable.

Reporting

The Working Group shall report to the Parish Council as appropriate.

Where the Clerk has submitted a Parish Council response under the Council's agreed delegated procedure following consideration by the Working Group, the response shall be reported to the next appropriate Parish Council meeting.

Review and Duration

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Parish Council as necessary and at least annually to ensure that they remain appropriate and reflect the Council's planning procedures and Scheme of Delegation.

The Working Group shall continue until the Parish Council resolves that it is no longer required or replaces it with alternative governance arrangements.

Earls Colne Parish Council

Braintree District Local Plan 2043 – Regulation 19 Response - Draft

Earls Colne Parish Council has considered the Regulation 19 Submission Draft against legal compliance and the four tests of soundness: whether the Plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Our concerns are based largely on Braintree District Council's own published evidence and whether that evidence fully supports the strategy now proposed.

Legal Compliance

ECPC has not at this stage identified a definitive failure of legal compliance.

However, we have concerns about whether the evidence base was sufficiently complete when the Regulation 19 Plan was approved for consultation.

We recognise that BDC has undertaken Regulation 18 consultation and has published the main documents expected at Regulation 19, including the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

However, BDC's Regulation 19 Transport Evidence is dated the 14th September 2026 and is itself described as a "Consultation draft" and a "Draft for Local Plan evidence base". This was only days before the Local Plan Sub-Committee considered the Submission Draft on the 17th September and Full Council approved it on the 21st September.

This does not automatically make the Plan unlawful. However, given that Regulation 19 is intended to be the Plan which the authority considers ready to submit for examination, ECPC considers that the status and timing of this evidence require explanation.

Positively Prepared

BDC has sought to meet its identified housing requirement, and ECPC accepts that this supports the Plan in terms of meeting development need.

Our concern is whether the location and scale of that growth can actually be accommodated sustainably.

BDC's own Regulation 19 Transport Evidence – dated the 14th September 2026 identifies increased traffic from Local Plan growth on the A1124 east of Halstead. Earls Colne lies directly on this corridor.

This means that development taking place outside Earls Colne can still have a significant effect on the village.

BDC's September 2026 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (REBT005) also identifies infrastructure which remains dependent upon future funding, land, route confirmation and other delivery arrangements.

ECPC therefore considers that meeting a housing number alone is not enough. The Plan also needs to show that the growth proposed can be supported by the infrastructure needed to accommodate it.

Justified

BDC has undertaken a Regulation 19 Sustainability Appraisal (REBR004), dated September 2026, which considers alternative development strategies.

However, the Sustainability Appraisal (September 2026) also identifies adverse effects associated with parts of the preferred strategy.

BDC's transport evidence also identifies increased traffic on the A1124 east of Halstead.

The issue for ECPC is therefore not whether alternatives have been considered — they have — but whether BDC has clearly demonstrated why the chosen strategy remains the most appropriate one where its own evidence identifies disadvantages and additional infrastructure pressures.

Where a strategy has significant adverse effects, there needs to be a clear evidence-based reason for choosing it over reasonable alternatives.

ECPC considers that this justification needs to be particularly clear where major growth is proposed which will affect existing communities outside the development area itself.

Effective

This is ECPC's main soundness concern.

BDC's own evidence shows that Local Plan growth will increase traffic on the A1124 east of Halstead and that infrastructure and mitigation will be needed.

Of particular concern is the proposed Halstead Link Road.

BDC's Regulation 19 Transport Evidence describes the Link Road as being required to mitigate increased traffic through Halstead arising from background growth and planned development. It goes further and states that the scheme is "essential for delivering the larger development sites in Halstead" and is expected to be funded entirely by the site developers.

The Link Road is also one of only three key highway mitigation schemes included in the Regulation 19 Scenario 3 transport modelling.

The September 2026 Sustainability Appraisal similarly states that the Link Road is expected to be delivered "at an early stage of the development."

However, BDC's September 2026 Infrastructure Delivery Plan records the A131 Halstead Relief Road / Link Road as a "Post-2043 / Longer term" project. It gives an estimated cost of £39 million, records a Local Plan site contribution to 2043 of £0, and states that the future strategic case, feasibility, funding and development requirements are still to be determined.

ECPC considers that this apparent inconsistency requires clarification. If the Link Road is essential to delivering the larger Halstead developments and forms part of the mitigation used to demonstrate that Local Plan growth can be accommodated, it is difficult to understand how the same scheme can be identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a longer-term project beyond 2043 with no Local Plan site contribution identified within the Plan period.

This is important because identifying mitigation is not the same as demonstrating that it will actually be delivered.

ECPC therefore has a significant concern that parts of the proposed growth strategy rely on infrastructure and mitigation which have not yet been shown to be sufficiently certain or deliverable to demonstrate that the Plan is effective.

Consistent with National Policy

National planning policy requires Local Plans to support sustainable development and properly consider strategic and cumulative impacts.

BDC's own evidence confirms increased traffic on the A1124 east of Halstead because of Local Plan development.

This is therefore a strategic Local Plan issue, rather than simply something that should be dealt with later through individual planning applications.

The same applies to infrastructure. Where BDC's own evidence identifies infrastructure as necessary to support growth, but funding, land or delivery arrangements remain unresolved, ECPC questions whether the Plan provides sufficient certainty that development will be sustainable.

The Local Plan should identify the strategic mitigation required and establish a credible delivery framework. Individual applications may secure contributions and implementation, but should not be relied upon to resolve an unidentified or uncoded strategic mitigation requirement.

ECPC therefore considers there is a soundness concern where BDC's own evidence identifies cumulative impacts, but the necessary mitigation has not yet been shown to be deliverable.

Overall Position

ECPC has not identified a definitive failure of legal compliance. Its objection concerns soundness, principally whether the proposed growth strategy is effective and deliverable.

However, based on BDC's own evidence, ECPC considers that questions remain regarding the completeness and timing of the Regulation 19 evidence base, and we are not satisfied that all four tests of soundness have yet been demonstrated in full.

Our principal concerns are:

- **Legal compliance:** ECPC has not identified a definitive failure of legal compliance, but considers that the draft status and timing of important Regulation 19 technical evidence require explanation.
- **Positively prepared:** BDC's own evidence shows that the proposed growth will create additional pressure on the A1124 and other infrastructure.

- **Justified:** where BDC's preferred strategy creates identified adverse effects, the reasons for choosing it over reasonable alternatives must be clearly evidenced.
- **Effective:** this is ECPC's strongest concern. The Regulation 19 Transport Evidence describes the Halstead Link Road as essential to delivering the larger development sites in Halstead and includes it within the transport mitigation, while the Sustainability Appraisal expects it to be delivered at an early stage of development. However, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan records the scheme as post-2043, with an estimated cost of £39 million, no Local Plan site contribution identified to 2043, and future feasibility, funding and development requirements still to be determined.
- **Consistent with national policy:** cumulative strategic impacts should be addressed through the Local Plan and not simply left to future individual planning applications.

ECPC objects to the Regulation 19 Submission Draft on grounds of soundness, principally effectiveness. BDC's own evidence describes the Link Road as essential and anticipates its early delivery, while its Infrastructure Delivery Plan places it beyond 2043 with funding and feasibility unresolved. That apparent contradiction goes to the credibility of the growth strategy itself. **Infrastructure cannot be treated as certain when justifying development, then uncertain when accounting for its delivery.**

Principal evidence relied upon

- Braintree District Local Plan 2043 – Regulation 19 Submission Draft
- Braintree Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal – Regulation 19: September 2026 (REBR004)
- Braintree Local Plan Review Regulation 19 Transport Evidence, dated the 14th September 2026 (REBT004)
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan: September 2026 (REBT005)
- National Planning Policy Framework applicable to the examination of the Plan
- Planning Inspectorate, *Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations*, updated on the 20th August 2026

File :- ECPCHALLSummaryOctober2026.

OCTOBER EDITION

Not much has changed this month. The Clerk handover, CW holidays and Councillor holidays have slowed progress.

Future Action Points, items of concern and current activities. This is the **summary version of the October** 2026 version of a continuing progression of the original document that was prepared to support budget requests. Changes since the last report are shown in red.

The later addendum of Small Works has been removed from this report and is now published as a document **and has been incorporated into the Clerk's Action Plan which will facilitate the setting of priorities. We will be adding Community Worker rainy day or winter tasks to that Plan.**

The early verbal reports of Fire inspection, H&S surveys and Risk assessments will be progressed and incorporated into the Action Plan.

We believe this document should be read and understood by all Councillors as they are all responsible for the Hall even though we have a delegated VH team.

The hall has suffered from many years of underspend on maintenance and care. Many areas and fittings are tired and dated. There are also some areas of major concern.

We believe that the Council as a whole needs to understand this and view the budget in the round. Would "your" budget be better spent elsewhere?

The team also strongly believe that the hall is under-used. We feel that it's a bit of a financial nightmare and that we should be making better use of it's earning potential by making it more attractive to hirers.

We have attempted to put a value on most remedial actions. In some cases, because the scale of the problem is as yet unknown, they are best guess.

The accuracy of the guess is unimportant, but the fact that there is a financial implication isn't.

Many of these items need attention. H&S and Fire Safety requirements, as they evolve, make several of them urgent so will incur unavoidable expense.

Effectively, this is also the Hall Management Team's task check list.

Heating and Ventilation

We need to review that working of the Main Hall ventilation system and try to time it's operation more effectively..

External Works (Inherited project)

The contractor has accepted our proposals on how to clear up outstanding works and agreed a final settlement. That has been paid and we await his attendance. **We need to chase this.**

The project to use S106 funds on window replacement needs urgent action.

We may also need to consider getting a key lock fitted to the double fire doors in the lobby. **CVW will be looking at this soon.**

We do have safeguarding issues which arise because the halls cannot currently be securely segregated.
Until the new key safes are in place we need to ask the Clerk to periodically change the access code.

The fitting cost of the electronic key safes might now be confined to CW activity.

Main Electrical Supply Board.

We have been advised that we should consider an update to the main supply board to MCB/RCD, a more up-to-date, and safer, unit that should see us safe from major changes for at least 10 years.

Currently, we just meet regulations but after the anticipated updating of the regs, we won't. The Fire Inspector called for fireproof cabinets. This upgrade provides them. We feel that electrical safety items should be done sooner than later. At best, we have to do this within two years so, even if we ignore the Fire Inspector's advice, we need to be either putting money away or just doing it.

The H&S survey revealed that the board needs to be 1. more secure and 2. have a 30 minute fire protection enclosure. The electrical upgrade provides the fire proofing and we will be fitting a lock to prevent unauthorised access.

Approved at the September meeting and contractor attendance has been arranged.

Office and Clerk Security

We need to look at the safety and security of the Clerks. We need a better camera entry system. The cameras purchased by the previous admin are record only. They may have their uses but entry security isn't one of them. The office door needs beefing up, the glass needs to be replaced or security filmed, the lock should be controllable by the clerk from the desk and we should probably look at installing a panic alarm.

The H&S survey also raised this issue and. Resolution of this is now back with the VH team.

Known Estimated Cost £ 3k

Floor Washing machines

We now have a decent machines that wash, pick up and dry.

There is a health and safety issue here. We have users who lay on the floor. We need to take account of that and have a timetable for floor cleaning that takes account of the hirers who need very clean floors.

Machine commissioning will take place in late October/early November

Notice Boards.

The damaged paintwork shows us that we need notice Boards in order to satisfy the need for posters and notices whilst avoiding damage to walls. This project would need to precede painting.

We suggest that we use the simple "click" type with round corners.

A4 are £4.99 and A3 are £6.50. There might be a case for A2 too. Each site will need an individual approach. Estimated cost includes paying for fitting. May 2026 agenda item for 4 x A3 boards (already purchased) was approved along with further expenditure to a total of £300.00.

We also need to tidy up existing statutory notices. This plan will include providing frames for them all. H&S have also requested more No Smoking

signs. **Four small boards will be fitted in October. 3 of them will be information boards for hall users.**

The prohibition of sticking anything to the walls will be added to the Hall Hirers conditions of Hire.

Bar Bottle Cooler and Bar area improvements.

Bar bottle cooler now in place.

Correct glasses purchased.

The procurement of a few more wine glasses is in hand.

Users report that we can now consider it to be a workable bar but we need to make it clear that there are no draught beer facilities at present even though some of the required equipment is present.

We can now store ice in the donated undercounter freezer which is in the glass washing room and where it makes a convenient shelf for when the glass washer is in use.

In the long term we should, perhaps, procure an ice maker. The current number of hirers does not justify that option at present.

There appears to be a need for a wine cooler. Approx £150.00

Medium Priority

1. Toilet Flushes

The flushing mechanisms are showing their age. The ease of flushing and the speed of response to operating the levers in two toilets is poor. We need to consider replacing the cisterns/flushes. One toilet seat needs replacing.

We await a report from our regular small works plumber. The cost of the first phase of works has been agreed by full council. **Plumber due in late October.** Known budget costs £400.00*

3. Door Blinds

One window blind between the hall and lobby needs to be replaced. We should also consider fitting blackout roller blinds to the other doors to enhance hall users' privacy. Fitting could be carried out by our own staff. Known Budget Cost of 3 blinds is £60.00*

Two blinds procured. A CW task.

4. Return the single lobby door to standard Spec.

As standard, doors are normally set to lock on closing with provision to disable the automatic locking for the period of hire. That means that it's just a door that people can use just the same as at home but without needing a key. (Pull the handle and the door opens). Hirers would be given the option to disable the self locking whilst the hall is in use. The door would then self close (as it should do) but still be openable. The idea is that the heat in the lobby is retained and a buffer of warm air is in place between the outside world and the halls. Contractor to be approached to re-enable manual disabling of the bar operation. On the CW work list to review and report back.

Can saving energy and money ever be a bad idea?

The safeguarding of vulnerable users applies to this item.

CVW booked to attend.

Budget cost £250.00

5. Rectify the faulty locking on the left hand door (from the inside) of the double lobby doors.

Both doors can be set to non self locking (fuel saving mode) and the key to do this is already on the hirers' key set. The left hand door drags and the locking

off mechanism is faulty. We need a contractor (or competent CW) to remedy both faults. It would also improve the hirers' experience. The default on both doors should be to self close. The right hand one would need attention to stop it self latching open, purely for energy saving reasons.

Actioned

9. Hall Chairs

We have had complaints about the lack of proper cushioning on the chairs. It's a fair point. We have found a supplier of upholstery foam and will be doing exploratory work. A review of the task has been added to the list of jobs that might come under the heading of rainy day jobs for the CWs that can be completed at the Queens Road Store.

9. Fridge/Freezers

The white fridge appears to not be working properly. Say £400.00 for a domestic type replacement. At best, it would be a larder type fridge (no freezer compartment) and the actual unit should be a spot decision on the day. It has been used as a wine cooler by bar hirers, raising the possibility that we need to procure a purpose made wine cooler rather than concern ourselves about this fridge.

An untidy option, but perhaps dispose of it and use the space for storage in crates?

11. Provide more Storage.

Some of the kitchen cupboards are under utilised so some rationalisation of their contents should be done and locks fitted.

Added to the list of possible CW activity. A rainy day job.

ECPCSummaryOctober2026.odt

Not a full list. The H&S report has not been seen

ACTION PLAN ITEMS - H&S

1. Clerk office window filming.
2. PAT Testing. Booked
3. Stair Lift Servicing - Completed.
4. Redundant dance mats (not ours) are gone.
5. Safety Tape on Stage Stairs and Bar Seating area margin. Low Priority
6. Check that the Stage lighting documentation is complete. It is.
7. Steps to stage need gates. Low Priority.
8. Bar fridge freezer move to glass washer area. Actioned.
9. Remove glass wash area door. A job for CW/Handyman
10. Non slip mats for bar top. Supplied in early June. Thank you to The Drum PH in Earls Colne.
11. Foyer "box office" glass filming. Low priority.
12. Small Hall stairs to stage need gates. Low priority
13. Electronic lock project to be progressed in October. Main door lock received. Keys procured for rear doors.
14. Replace childproof inserts in electrical sockets. All low level sockets are now protected. The kitchen ones, on the assumption that it's only infants at risk, will not be done. NB that UK sockets are inherently safe anyway. The infants at risk would need tools to open the shutters to expose live contacts.
15. Fit code operated locks to both end of the kitchen. Locks received.

16. Rearrange shelves in COSSH cupboard. More storage lower down and none above head height. Storage for floor washing machines attachments is needed. **A CW rainy day job.**

ACTION PLAN ITEMS - FIRE Some questions to H&S and the author of the report remain unanswered at present.

1. Front RH fire door operation A pull handle and an operating instruction notice have been fitted. This will be monitored.
2. Gas Meter cupboard needs a Fire Key, not a keysafe lock. **Lock received. Planned for October as a priority CW task.**
3. Cooker gas and electrical tests. Sibley consulted in June. **Visit imminent.**
4. Cooker hood filters. Councillor to Clean.
5. Extract system Services:- 1 x kitchen, 1 x Glass wash area, 1 x Main Hall, 1 x Toilets. Sibleys can do all except the Main Hall one. Date tba.
6. Move Fire Assembly Point sign. H&S have resolved this.
7. All fire door brush seals
8. Main Hall PA PAT testing? **Same time as everything else, probably October when switchboard is upgraded.**
9. Remove bump stop on Main Hall entrance from Foyer. This was put in place because the closer is rather fierce. We have added this to the list of jobs that the CW's might be able to tackle. There will be a spare closer when the glass washer area door is removed. If it can't be adjusted to close softly, we will need to change to conventional closers. Estimated £400.00
10. Fireproofing of Stage Curtains. Investigate and remedy if needed. Some research has been done. Supplier of materials identified.

ACTION PLAN ITEMS - FOOD HYGIENE

1. Current Food Hygiene Certifications
2. Draught Beer lines. No action proposed. Visiting bars will be told that there are no facilities. Without cask refrigeration, these are of no use.

ACTION PLAN ITEMS - OTHER

1. Procure a floor washer. Purchased
2. Procure a small area spot cleaner. Purchased.
3. Rectify/replace Bar area water heater. Resolved
4. Progress the poor performing toilet flush and other minor issues. Agreed at the June meeting. Awaiting Plumber.
5. Painting Small Hall Agreed at June meeting. The question about a) festoon lights and b) More hooks for Xmas decorations has now been resolved and is on a list of CW tasks. New notice boards will need to have been fitted before paint.

END of Report

ECPCHALLSummaryOctober2026



EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Email: clerk@earlscolne-pc.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.earlscolne-pc.gov.uk>

Tel: 01787 224370

Terms of Reference – Village Hall Working Group

Purpose

The Village Hall Working Group (“the Working Group”) is established by Earls Colne Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) to provide oversight of the Parish Council’s Village Hall and associated car park.

The Working Group shall consider the condition, use, maintenance, development, safety and financial sustainability of these assets, identify priorities and make recommendations to the Parish Council.

Objectives

The Working Group shall:

- Provide oversight of the condition and effective use of the Village Hall and car park.
- Consider maintenance, repair, replacement and improvement priorities.
- Review significant issues and information reported by the Clerk.
- Consider longer-term asset management and investment requirements.
- Oversee the Council’s approach to health and safety, fire safety and statutory compliance.
- Consider opportunities to improve accessibility, energy efficiency and community use.
- Support the annual budget-setting process by identifying priorities and future requirements.
- Consider significant matters raised by users, hirers or members of the community.
- Consider opportunities for grants or external funding where appropriate.

Status

The Working Group is an advisory working group of the Parish Council.

It has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, incur expenditure, enter into contracts, hold funds, or commit the Parish Council to any course of action without the correct delegation.

All recommendations of the Working Group shall be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration and formal approval.

Membership

The Working Group shall consist of Parish Councillors appointed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council may appoint non-councillor members to the Working Group, including other members of the community with relevant experience or expertise where necessary.

The Parish Council may appoint or remove members of the Working Group at any time.

Lead Member

The Lead Member of the Working Group shall be appointed by the Working Group

The Clerk to the Parish Council shall provide administrative and professional support to the Working Group.

Quorum

As the Working Group is advisory, no formal quorum is required.

Any recommendations made by the Working Group should, where practicable, reflect a clear consensus of its members.

Meetings

The Working Group shall meet as required to progress its work.

Meetings may be informal and are not subject to the formal notice and public access requirements applicable to meetings of the Parish Council.

Brief notes of meetings may be kept where appropriate.

The Parish Council's Code of Conduct applies to all Councillors participating in the Working Group.

Where sensitive or confidential matters are discussed, these shall be handled in accordance with the Parish Council's confidentiality and data protection policies.

Remit

The Working Group shall provide oversight of the following areas-

Village Hall

- Review the general condition and suitability of the Village Hall and consider whether maintenance, repair or improvement is required.
- Review maintenance and repair requirements identified by the Clerk and consider their priority, urgency and financial implications.
- Consider the condition and future replacement of fixtures, fittings, furniture and equipment, and make recommendations where investment is required.
- Review the condition and effectiveness of heating, lighting, ventilation, kitchen and toilet facilities, considering any improvements or replacements required.
- Consider accessibility and identify improvements that could make the Hall more accessible and suitable for all users.
- Review energy efficiency and utility costs and consider opportunities to improve efficiency or reduce running costs.
- Consider the effectiveness of cleaning and other contracted services, based on information provided by the Clerk, and raise any concerns or recommendations.
- Consider how the Hall is being used and identify opportunities to increase community use and benefit.
- Consider longer-term refurbishment and capital requirements and make recommendations to the Parish Council regarding future investment and priorities.

Car Park

- Review the general condition of the car park surface and consider maintenance, repair or resurfacing requirements.
- Consider drainage arrangements and any recurring issues with standing water, surface drainage or associated maintenance.
- Review lighting and signage and consider whether they remain adequate, safe and appropriate.
- Consider access and accessibility, including whether the car park is suitable and safe for users and visitors.
- Review markings, boundaries and the general appearance of the car park and identify maintenance or improvement requirements.
- Consider longer-term repair, resurfacing or improvement requirements and make recommendations regarding priorities and expenditure.

Health and Safety

- Review significant health and safety risks identified by the Clerk through inspections, risk assessments, incidents or other relevant information.
- Review accident, incident and near-miss information provided by the Clerk and consider whether recurring issues or improvements require Council attention.
- Consider the adequacy of arrangements for the safe use of the Village Hall, including arrangements for hirers, contractors, staff and members of the public.
- Review significant remedial actions arising from inspections or risk assessments and consider whether appropriate action is being progressed.
- Consider whether proposed changes to the Hall, its equipment or its use may create additional health and safety considerations.

Fire Safety

- Review findings and recommendations arising from the Fire Risk Assessment and consider whether

- any matters require Council action or expenditure.
- Review information regarding the fire alarm and detection system, including significant faults, testing or servicing issues reported by the Clerk.
 - Review the condition and servicing of emergency lighting and consider any issues requiring attention.
 - Review information regarding fire-fighting equipment, including servicing, defects or replacement requirements.
 - Consider the adequacy of emergency exits and evacuation arrangements and review any significant issues identified by the Clerk or competent persons.
 - Review significant findings from fire safety inspections, testing and servicing and consider whether remedial action is required.
 - Consider the implications of changes to the building or its use where these may affect fire safety arrangements.

The Working Group shall not undertake operational or specialist duties or replace the work of competent persons, inspectors or contractors.

Financial Matters

The Working Group may make recommendations concerning expenditure, maintenance, repairs, replacement and improvement projects.

The Working Group shall contribute to the annual budget-setting process by identifying priorities and longer-term financial requirements.

Expenditure shall only be incurred in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, approved budgets and delegated authority.

Reporting

The Working Group shall report to each ordinary meeting of the Parish Council, or more frequently if required.

Reports shall include:

- matters considered;
- information provided by the Clerk;
- significant issues arising;
- priorities identified;
- recommendations requiring Council approval; and
- anticipated expenditure where applicable.

Review and Duration

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Parish Council as necessary.

The Working Group shall continue until:

- the Parish Council resolves that the Working Group is no longer required; or
- the Parish Council resolves to amend, replace or incorporate the Working Group into alternative governance arrangements.



REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

**Sections shaded Blue to be completed by
the requesting member**

**Sections unshaded to be completed by
the Proper Officer or their delegate**

Item topic	Earls Colne Heritage Museum
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	No
Proposed by	Ian Sparks
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	The item to be discussed and decision to be voted on For debate and decision at October meeting
If motion, please indicate required wording *	To agree to the ECHM hiring the Village Hall, small, during the renovations of the Museum.
Background (provided by the proposer)	Part 1.....The ECHM is to have renovations starting in November 2026 which will last for approx. one year. The Museum is a great asset to the Community and should be supported. They wish to have use of the small Village Hall for this period via a pop-up display starting on the first Monday of November, the 2nd, from 12 noon till 4pm once a month. Part2.....They obviously have a restricted budget and I propose that ECPC agree to pay their hire fee for the period. Means to be agreed. Part 3.....The ECHM are willing to participate within the Village Hall hiring scheme by organising talks to groups who use the Village Hall, ie the warm hub, café etc as recognition of their commitment.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	Covering the cost of the hiring, either by a free use grant or by a grant of the cost from ECPC funds. The cost to ECPC is

	as follows; Heating/utilities.. working on costs as raised for the Youth group for a 2 hour session for the main hall of £35 per week during heating season of Nov-Mar and £10 per week outside season, this causes the costs for the ECHM hire to be once per month for a 4 hour session of £70 in heating season and £20 outside heating season. Therefore, 5 months @ £70pm = £350 (heating) and 7@£20 = £140 for heating/utilities per year of £490. Hiring of the small hall for 4 hours @£14 ph =£56 per month and 12 x £56 = £672 for a total cost of £1162. There is a realisation that the cost of utilities will probably go up in the near or longer future and cannot be determined. Hire costings for the Village Hall may also rise after the budget in April, again undetermined. Therefore, the costing which cannot be determined for any grant to ECHM is possibly as follows using a 5% increase after Mar: Hall @ £56+5%= 58.80 x 7=£411.60, Utilities @ £20+5%= 21x7=£147 for cold season increase total of £558.60 plus hot season of £630 brings updated 5% total to £1188.60.
Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	
Legal implications	
Proposer's signature	Ian Sparks

Explanatory Notes:

- * 1. If discussion is required before a decision and the proposer is not clear on what the outcome of discussions may be, please indicate 'to discuss and decide' - a motion will then be formulated at the meeting;
- * 2. If discussion or consideration is required *without* a decision, please indicate 'to discuss', 'to consider' etc;
- * 3. If a decision is sought and a motion required (for example, a recommendation by a committee), please indicate this.

Standing Orders 9 and 10 apply to notices of motion:

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer



A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least five clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least three clear days before the meeting.

If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

Subject to Standing Order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular Committee or sub-Committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a Committee or sub-Committee and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;



- xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii. to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii. to exclude a Councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular Standing Order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close a meeting.

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 15/10/2026)

Car Park & Conveniences

		Last Year 2025-2026				Current Year 2026-2027								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
Code	Title	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
142	CP Rates			2,500.00	2,536.03					2,536.03	2,012.40		2,012.40		
143	CP Water			1,000.00	786.42					1,000.00	493.82		493.82		
144	CP Electricity			1,300.00	2,176.98					1,300.00	471.80		471.80		
145	CP Insurance														
147	Cleaning/Janitorial Sup			300.00	234.90					300.00	99.93		99.93		
148	CP Maintenance			450.00	3,194.43					1,500.00	397.73		397.73		
149	Security Alarm			150.00	340.00					150.00					
151	EV Charging														
SUB TOTAL				5,700.00	9,268.76					6,786.03	3,475.68		3,475.68		

General Administration

		Last Year 2025-2026				Current Year 2026-2027								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
Code	Title	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
4	Stationery Misc		9.19	1,200.00	584.58					400.00	300.55		300.55		
5	Insurance			5,000.00	5,298.47					5,500.00	5,315.62		5,315.62		
6	Equipment			1,000.00	1,786.73					500.00	36.63		36.63		
7	Postage			10.00	8.99					10.00					
8	Audit Fee			1,550.00	985.00					1,600.00	840.00		840.00		
9	Memberships		392.40	1,200.00	5,207.91		124.80		124.80	2,000.00	3,114.13		3,114.13		
10	Tea/Coffee/Milk			500.00	213.72					250.00	109.37		109.37		
11	Training			1,200.00	1,071.17					2,000.00	1,322.00		1,322.00		
12	Annual Report			250.00											
13	Neighbourhood Plan			250.00											
14	S137			100.00											
15	Grants to local orgs									2,000.00					

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 15/10/2026)

16	Community Special		1,600.00				1,600.00			
17	Bank Interest	1,619.26			1,200.00	794.51	794.51			
18	Grants	1,306.50		5,963.01		2,035.44	2,035.44		500.00	500.00
19	Precept	177,332.00			182,650.00	182,650.00	182,650.00			
21	Neighbourhood Plan C									
22	Devolution Scheme									
23	VAT	3.89				6,182.75	6,182.75			
24	Website		1,100.00	725.87				650.00	567.19	567.19
25	Poo Bags	163.30	1,000.00			58.22	58.22	500.00	119.80	119.80
26	Communications		570.00	687.87				650.00	466.48	466.48
27	Computing Hardware		150.00	599.14						
28	Computing Software		1,750.00	2,817.93				2,200.00	2,793.90	2,793.90
29	Photocopier		2,500.00	3,942.14				2,500.00	1,704.54	1,704.54
32	Legals		5,000.00	10,590.62				15,000.00	46.52	46.52
33	Section 106	18,752.98	250.00	3,350.00						
34	Staff Christmas		500.00							
504	Inspections			951.00				100.00	80.00	80.00
505	Bank charges	25.00		93.41		300.00	300.00		133.40	133.40
SUB TOTAL		199,604.52	26,680.00	44,877.56	183,850.00	192,145.72	192,145.72	37,460.00	17,450.13	17,450.13

Museum		Last Year 2025-2026				Current Year 2026-2027				Next Year					
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments		Receipts	Payments		
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
126	Museum Grant			1,200.00		211.64		211.64	1,200.00	1,200.00		1,200.00			
SUB TOTAL				1,200.00		211.64		211.64	1,200.00	1,200.00		1,200.00			

Earls Colne Parish Council

15 October 2026 (2026-2027)

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 15/10/2026)

Projects		Last Year 2025-2026				Current Year 2026-2027								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
500	Village Hall mural														
501	Levelling Up Grant - B				2,000.00										
502	Enovert		5,427.00		5,427.00		15,170.00		15,170.00		1,015.00		1,015.00		
503	Warm Welcome - EAL				160.14										
SUB TOTAL			5,427.00		7,587.14		15,170.00		15,170.00		1,015.00		1,015.00		

Staff remuneration		Last Year 2025-2026				Current Year 2026-2027								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
3	Employer NI			5,200.00	18,720.48					8,724.00	5,525.22		5,525.22		
41	Pension Contributions			2,500.00	6,313.87					13,653.00	9,103.20		9,103.20		
81	Staff Salaries			107,000.00	57,402.90					88,000.00	42,384.25		42,384.25		
SUB TOTAL				114,700.00	82,437.25					110,377.00	57,012.67		57,012.67		

Village Environment		Last Year 2025-2026				Current Year 2026-2027								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
42	Highways/CCTV			500.00						1,000.00	301.46		301.46		
43	Repairs & Maintenanc			1,000.00	534.89					500.00	758.49		758.49		
44	Community Worker Ec		5,500.00	250.00	2,342.03					1,500.00	18,198.20		18,198.20		
45	Fuel			250.00	236.96					300.00	353.51		353.51		
46	Vehicle Insurance									675.00	260.71		260.71		
47	Playground Equipmen		49,434.63	1,000.00	68,247.26					1,000.00					

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 15/10/2026)

48	Litter Bins		200.00	188.26				2,000.00	42.00		42.00
51	Dog bins							305.00			
52	Telephone Kiosk			300.00				500.00			
53	Water Pump		200.00					200.00			
54	Allotments										
55	Church Clock		800.00	350.00				500.00			
56	Amenity Electric Vehic		500.00	2,577.17				500.00	83.81		83.81
57	Defibrillator		220.00					500.00			
58	Street Lighting Mainte		600.00	933.31				3,000.00	197.00		197.00
59	Street lighting Energy		2,800.00	3,110.28				3,250.00	660.33		660.33
60	Special Events	600.00	3,000.00	30.00				1,000.00	525.00		525.00
61	Christmas Tree/Carol S		600.00	783.70	259.00	259.00		500.00	200.00		200.00
62	Planting		300.00	105.21				500.00	91.70		91.70
63	Trees		1,500.00	4,840.00				2,000.00	665.00		665.00
64	Grass Cutting		100.00		94.50	406.16	406.16				
65	Allotment Fees	10.00			10.00						
66	Street Cleaning	3,291.58			3,200.00	3,390.33	3,390.33		290.64		290.64
67	VE Window Cleaning										
68	Contractors										
69	Sundries		600.00	4.37					62.09		62.09
71	Memorial		200.00	37.50				100.00			
SUB TOTAL		58,836.21	14,620.00	84,620.94	3,304.50	4,055.49	4,055.49	19,830.00	22,689.94	22,689.94	

Village Hall		Last Year 2025-2026				Current Year 2026-2027								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
82	VH Rates			1,700.00	1,873.13					1,875.00	2,678.84		2,678.84		
83	VH Maintenance			8,000.00	2,738.81					7,500.00	6,405.46		6,405.46		
84	Hall Hire		15,390.50		65.00	13,175.00	8,720.25		8,720.25						

Earls Colne Parish Council

15 October 2026 (2026-2027)

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 15/10/2026)

85	VH Insurance									
86	VH Electricity	35.00	4,500.00	2,414.36		2,700.00	1,293.66	1,293.66		
87	Gas	160.00	13,000.00	5,125.47		5,775.00	981.66	981.66		
88	VH Water		600.00	302.44		250.00	1,702.34	1,702.34		
89	VH Legionella									
90	District Councillor Proj									
91	Fire Exits/Alarms/Eme		1,000.00	777.70		1,300.00	925.09	925.09		
92	Cleaning/Cloakroom S		1,000.00	411.87		360.00	360.67	360.67		
93	Waste Collection		1,700.00	1,779.04		420.00	1,556.99	1,556.99		
94	License Fees		200.00	90.00		150.00				
95	Refurbishment		2,000.00	17,582.00						
96	Stairlift		160.00			300.00				
98	Contractors		250.00							
99	Sundries		600.00	859.89		250.00	95.00	95.00		
101	Defibrillator Consumat					200.00	67.99	67.99		
102	Window Cleaning		500.00			600.00				
103	Loan Repayment									
104	Hall Hire Deposit	-100.00		220.00	55.00	55.00				
105	Community Hub					1,000.00	163.61	163.61		
106	Floors and Windows					8,000.00				
107	Equipment					850.00	3,514.57	3,514.57		
SUB TOTAL		15,485.50	35,210.00	34,239.71	13,175.00	8,775.25	8,775.25	31,530.00	19,745.88	19,745.88

Summary

TOTAL	279,353.23	198,110.00	263,031.36	200,329.50	220,358.10	220,358.10	207,183.03	122,589.30	122,589.30
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Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
PAYMENTS															
Car Park & Convenien															
CP Rates	2,536.03	290.40	287.00	287.00	287.00	287.00	287.00	287.00						2,012.40	523.63
CP Water	1,000.00		131.27			362.55								493.82	506.18
CP Electricity	1,300.00	145.94	98.39	73.58	47.94	50.09	55.86							471.80	828.20
CP Insurance															
Cleaning/Janitorial Supp	300.00		24.48		12.75		62.70							99.93	200.07
CP Maintenance	1,500.00	67.43		26.66	50.00	69.20	148.24	36.20						397.73	1,102.27
Security Alarm	150.00														150.00
EV Charging															
General Administratio															
Stationery Misc	400.00	4.50	47.03		106.98		142.04							300.55	99.45
Insurance	5,500.00		5,315.62											5,315.62	184.38
Equipment	500.00				36.63									36.63	463.37
Postage	10.00														10.00
Audit Fee	1,600.00						840.00							840.00	760.00
Memberships	2,000.00	2,906.13			47.00	50.00	40.00	71.00						3,114.13	-1,114.13
Tea/Coffee/Milk	250.00	2.71	58.93	9.40	1.67	33.16	3.50							109.37	140.63
Training	2,000.00	585.00	60.00	27.00		300.00		350.00						1,322.00	678.00
Annual Report															
Neighbourhood Plan															
S137															
Grants to local orgs	2,000.00														2,000.00
Community Special	1,600.00														1,600.00
Bank Interest															
Grants		500.00												500.00	-500.00
Precept															
Neighbourhood Plan Gr															
Devolution Scheme															
VAT															

Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
Website	650.00	62.17	194.17	62.17	62.17	62.17	62.17	62.17						567.19	82.81
Poo Bags	500.00		59.90		59.90									119.80	380.20
Communications	650.00	66.64	66.64	66.64	66.64	66.64	66.64	66.64						466.48	183.52
Computing Hardware															
Computing Software	2,200.00	337.50				888.00	1,568.40							2,793.90	-593.90
Photocopier	2,500.00		154.62	716.85	176.22		656.85							1,704.54	795.46
Legals	15,000.00						46.52							46.52	14,953.48
Section 106															
Staff Christmas															
Inspections	100.00						80.00							80.00	20.00
Bank charges		15.75	19.50	22.10	18.30	22.20	23.30	16.50						137.65	-137.65
Museum															
Museum Grant	1,200.00				1,200.00									1,200.00	
Projects															
Village Hall mural															
Levelling Up Grant - BD															
Enovert		-333.33	1,348.33											1,015.00	-1,015.00
Warm Welcome - EALC															
Staff remuneration															
Employer NI	8,724.00	1,580.35	613.02	629.25		1,225.60	851.61	625.39						5,525.22	3,198.78
Pension Contributions	13,653.00	1,347.01	1,375.18		2,650.13	1,110.57	1,500.81	1,119.50						9,103.20	4,549.80
Staff Salaries	88,000.00	7,194.16	6,294.63	6,405.53	5,019.22	7,670.57	7,891.21	1,908.93						42,384.25	45,615.75
Village Environment															
Highways/CCTV	1,000.00			22.50		24.98	253.98							301.46	698.54
Repairs & Maintenance	500.00	268.00		30.00	240.00	216.50	3.99							758.49	-258.49
Community Worker Equ	1,500.00	16,546.13	32.83	75.55	11.79	375.72	1,156.18							18,198.20	-16,698.20
Fuel	300.00	35.17	61.88	129.21	18.00	40.50	68.75							353.51	-53.51
Vehicle Insurance	675.00	260.71												260.71	414.29
Playground Equipment	1,000.00														1,000.00
Litter Bins	2,000.00				42.00									42.00	1,958.00
Dog bins	305.00														305.00

Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
Telephone Kiosk	500.00														500.00
Water Pump	200.00														200.00
Allotments															
Church Clock	500.00														500.00
Amenity Electric Vehicle	500.00			83.81										83.81	416.19
Defibrillator	500.00														500.00
Street Lighting Maintena	3,000.00	197.00												197.00	2,803.00
Street lighting Energy	3,250.00			95.07	173.04	185.13	207.09							660.33	2,589.67
Special Events	1,000.00				525.00									525.00	475.00
Christmas Tree/Carol St	500.00							200.00						200.00	300.00
Planting	500.00						41.20	50.50						91.70	408.30
Trees	2,000.00	295.00	370.00											665.00	1,335.00
Grass Cutting															
Allotment Fees															
Street Cleaning		290.64												290.64	-290.64
VE Window Cleaning															
Contractors															
Sundries		26.96		35.13										62.09	-62.09
Memorial	100.00														100.00
Village Hall															
VH Rates	1,875.00	386.84	382.00	382.00	382.00	382.00	382.00	382.00						2,678.84	-803.84
VH Maintenance	7,500.00		1,247.50	2,438.00	2,494.32		225.64							6,405.46	1,094.54
Hall Hire															
VH Insurance															
VH Electricity	2,700.00	501.91	184.62		310.74		296.39							1,293.66	1,406.34
Gas	5,775.00	437.75	235.12	171.51	41.36	32.32	32.32	31.28						981.66	4,793.34
VH Water	250.00		203.94			1,498.40								1,702.34	-1,452.34
VH Legionella															
District Councillor Proje															
Fire Exits/Alarms/Emerg	1,300.00		690.00		35.09	200.00								925.09	374.91
Cleaning/Cloakroom Su	360.00	143.08	94.30		11.75		111.54							360.67	-0.67

Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
Waste Collection	420.00	80.59	1,373.94			51.23		51.23						1,556.99	-1,136.99
License Fees	150.00														150.00
Refurbishment															
Stairlift	300.00														300.00
Contractors															
Sundries	250.00	95.00												95.00	155.00
Defibrillator Consumabl	200.00	67.99												67.99	132.01
Window Cleaning	600.00														600.00
Loan Repayment															
Hall Hire Deposit															
Community Hub	1,000.00	83.68			79.93									163.61	836.39
Floors and Windows	8,000.00														8,000.00
Equipment	850.00		643.01		2,834.08		37.48							3,514.57	-2,664.57
	207,183.03	34,488.81	21,667.85	11,788.96	17,041.65	15,204.53	17,143.41	5,258.34							
														Total:	122,593.55
														Variance:	84,589.48

Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
RECEIPTS															
Car Park & Convenien															
CP Rates															
CP Water															
CP Electricity															
CP Insurance															
Cleaning/Janitorial Supp															
CP Maintenance															
Security Alarm															
EV Charging															
General Administratio															
Stationery Misc															
Insurance															
Equipment															
Postage															
Audit Fee															
Memberships			124.80											124.80	124.80
Tea/Coffee/Milk															
Training															
Annual Report															
Neighbourhood Plan															
S137															
Grants to local orgs															
Community Special															
Bank Interest	1,200.00			394.12			400.39							794.51	-405.49
Grants		630.44	1,405.00											2,035.44	2,035.44
Precept	182,650.00	91,325.00					91,325.00							182,650.00	
Neighbourhood Plan Gr															
Devolution Scheme															
VAT				6,182.75										6,182.75	6,182.75

Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
Website															
Poo Bags			17.27	25.95				15.00						58.22	58.22
Communications															
Computing Hardware															
Computing Software															
Photocopier															
Legals															
Section 106															
Staff Christmas															
Inspections															
Bank charges				150.00	150.00									300.00	300.00
Museum															
Museum Grant		211.64												211.64	211.64
Projects															
Village Hall mural															
Levelling Up Grant - BD															
Enovert				15,170.00										15,170.00	15,170.00
Warm Welcome - EALC															
Staff remuneration															
Employer NI															
Pension Contributions															
Staff Salaries															
Village Environment															
Highways/CCTV															
Repairs & Maintenance															
Community Worker Equ															
Fuel															
Vehicle Insurance															
Playground Equipment															
Litter Bins															
Dog bins															

Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
Telephone Kiosk															
Water Pump															
Allotments															
Church Clock															
Amenity Electric Vehicle															
Defibrillator															
Street Lighting Maintena															
Street lighting Energy															
Special Events															
Christmas Tree/Carol St				259.00										259.00	259.00
Planting															
Trees															
Grass Cutting	94.50			406.16										406.16	311.66
Allotment Fees	10.00														-10.00
Street Cleaning	3,200.00			3,390.33										3,390.33	190.33
VE Window Cleaning															
Contractors															
Sundries															
Memorial															
Village Hall															
VH Rates															
VH Maintenance															
Hall Hire	13,175.00	1,351.00	2,179.00	1,916.00	1,734.75	337.50	1,022.00	180.00						8,720.25	-4,454.75
VH Insurance															
VH Electricity															
Gas															
VH Water															
VH Legionella															
District Councillor Proje															
Fire Exits/Alarms/Emerg															
Cleaning/Cloakroom Su															

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

Created by  **Scribe**

REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

**Sections shaded Blue to be completed by
the requesting member**

**Sections unshaded to be completed by
the Proper Officer or their delegate**

Item topic	Releasing monies from one project to another
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	No
Proposed by	Ian Sparks
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	Discussion and agreement to the proposal
If motion, please indicate required wording *	1.. To agree to release the monies held in the CCTV budget to the ECHM hiring of Hall project 2.. If agreement occurs, to close the project for the foreseeable time
Background (provided by the proposer)	Monies were placed in a budget for the CCTV project at the Car Park Toilet area after vandalism which has decreased greatly. BDC were involved as a partner and were looking at helping out the Parish Council both financially and with support including the supply and fitting of the equipment. Unfortunately, they have informed us that they are not able to assist in this project. If the Parish Council wished to continue with project privately, enquiries reveal that the costs for a very durable system plus computer software for monitoring will be in the region of £4000, hence the request for monies to be re allocated and the CCTV project to be suspended.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	As outlined, re allocation of monies from one project to another involving £946 at present.



Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	
Legal implications	
Proposer's signature	Ian Sparks

Explanatory Notes:

- * 1. If discussion is required before a decision and the proposer is not clear on what the outcome of discussions may be, please indicate 'to discuss and decide' - a motion will then be formulated at the meeting;
- * 2. If discussion or consideration is required *without* a decision, please indicate 'to discuss', 'to consider' etc;
- * 3. If a decision is sought and a motion required (for example, a recommendation by a committee), please indicate this.

Standing Orders 9 and 10 apply to notices of motion:

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least five clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least three clear days before the meeting.

If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

Subject to Standing Order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.



Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular Committee or sub-Committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a Committee or sub-Committee and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - xii. to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
 - xiii. to exclude a Councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - xv. to suspend a particular Standing Order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
 - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xvii. to close a meeting.

INTERNAL CONTROL ADVISOR REPORT – OCTOBER 2026

PROCEDURE BEING REVIEWED – BANK MANDATE RECORDS APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2026

- METHODOLOGY

1. Obtain Bank Mandate Forms from Clerk.
2. Cross reference Names of Councillors being added and removed.

COMMENTS:

In my opinion the Bank Madate Forms from Unity Bank are not particularly user friendly, I have checked that the addition and removal of Councillor signatories have been actioned. A current list of approved signatories for confirmation and cross referencing has been requested from Unity.

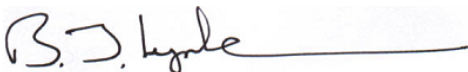
PROCEDURE BEING REVIEWED – PURCHASE INVOICES – RECEIPT AND APPROVAL JULY 2026.

- METHODOLOGY

1. Check hard copy of Invoices against list of Invoices sent to Councillors for approval. **Done and all relevant Invoices/Direct Debit records were present.**
2. Check receipt of Invoices list authorisation sent to Councillors. **Cross referenced July Authorisation List to Scribe Payments Lists, all OK.**

COMMENTS:

At the May full Council Meeting all Direct Debits are agreed for the current Financial Year. Any new Direct Debits that need to be added during the Financial Year are required to be approved and included in the minutes as such at a full Council Meeting. Currently there is no confirmation back to the Clerk from the Councillors authorising the Invoice List that they have actually reviewed and authorised the invoices listed, however there is no requirement in the current Terms of Reference for this to be done.



B J Lynham

EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL CONTROL ADVISOR

October Highways report

If you've travelled towards Halstead over the last few days, you'll have seen the massive drilling machine at the bridge roadworks. Stands at least 50 feet high when erected, a real monster. Drilling for the columns for the temporary bridge on the "bypass" and later to do the columns for the new bridge. Let's hope that the dryish weather holds for while as they seem to be making good headway.

Even more traffic lights and work at the Halstead Road junction with Station Road, this time to add a kerb and make the junction exit towards the village from Station Road for drivers to have a better view of traffic when turning. No more straining to look right! By the time you read this all should be completed.

Still no news on the applications to Highways for the resigning of the footway in Park Lane and the disabled bays in the High Street, but you always expect a long wait from sending in before hearing. Let's hope.

Some of the rattly drains in Halstead Road have been repaired given the residents a quitter time.

The hedging in Halstead Road between The Croft and Morleys Road has been cut back and cleaned up apparently by the owners of the property regarding a possible sale, so at least there is now a clearer footpath.

Ongoing potholes are slowly being repaired in the area, I only wish that they would hit an area and do all that need repairs in one shot and not by odd bits here and there, but they are in charge and all we can do is remind them of where the potholes are.

Continue to let Highways and the Parish Council know about road defects. We are in the same boat as you in that we can only tell Highways what is wrong and where, so keep badgering them.

Ian Sparks Chairman

Cat Dennis Vice Chairman



EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Terms of Reference – Highways and Facilities Working Group

Purpose

The Highways and Facilities Working Group ("the Working Group") is established by Earls Colne Parish Council ("the Parish Council") to consider matters relating to local highways, traffic, parking and road safety, and to monitor the condition and maintenance requirements of Parish Council-owned facilities and assets within its remit.

The Working Group will work alongside the Clerk to identify issues, monitor progress, consider maintenance requirements and develop recommendations for consideration by the Parish Council.

Objectives

The objectives of the Working Group are to:

- support the Parish Council in maintaining its existing facilities and assets to an appropriate standard;
- identify maintenance, repair and replacement requirements at an early stage;
- ensure highway, traffic, parking and road safety concerns affecting the parish are identified and appropriately raised with the relevant authority;
- support effective liaison with Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, utility providers, contractors and other relevant organisations;
- help the Parish Council prioritise maintenance and repair requirements based on need, risk, condition and available resources;
- provide clear and informed recommendations to the Parish Council where decisions or expenditure are required.

Status

The Working Group is an advisory working group of the Parish Council.

It has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, incur expenditure, enter into contracts, hold funds, or commit the Parish Council to any course of action without the correct delegation. All recommendations of the Working Group shall be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration and formal approval, unless the matter falls within an existing delegation to the Clerk.

Membership

The Working Group shall consist of Parish Councillors appointed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council may appoint non-councillor members to the Working Group, including members of the community with relevant experience or expertise where appropriate.

The Parish Council may appoint or remove members of the Working Group at any time.

Lead Member

The Lead Member of the Working Group shall be appointed by the Working Group.

The Clerk to the Parish Council shall provide administrative and professional support to the Working Group.

Quorum

As the Working Group is advisory only, no formal quorum is required.

Any recommendations made by the Working Group should, where practicable, reflect a clear consensus of its members.

Meetings

The Working Group shall meet as required to progress its work.

Meetings may be informal and should be arranged in consultation with the Clerk to ensure that matters can be progressed effectively.

Where appropriate, the Working Group may undertake site visits or inspections of Parish Council assets within its remit.

Brief notes and action points may be recorded where appropriate.

Remit

The Working Group shall:

Highways, Traffic and Road Safety

- monitor local highway, traffic, parking, pedestrian and road safety issues affecting the parish;
- identify matters requiring attention by Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, utility providers or other relevant bodies;
- support the Parish Council in making appropriate representations to the relevant authority;
- maintain an overview of issues reported to external authorities and, where appropriate, monitor progress and report back to the Parish Council;
- consider matters relating to signage, road markings, traffic management and pedestrian safety where these affect the parish.

The Working Group does not have responsibility for the maintenance or management of highways or other infrastructure that falls under the responsibility of another authority.

Queens Road Car Park

- monitor the condition, appearance, safety and general usability of the Queens Road Car Park;
- identify maintenance and repair requirements;
- consider matters relating to surfacing, drainage, signage, lighting, boundaries and associated infrastructure;
- monitor the condition and management of vegetation and shrubbery around the car park and identify where trimming or other maintenance is required;
- identify longer-term repair or replacement requirements and make recommendations to the Parish Council where appropriate.

Public Toilets

- monitor the condition, cleanliness, accessibility, safety and general standard of the Parish Council's public toilets;
- identify maintenance and repair requirements;
- consider issues relating to fixtures, fittings, plumbing, electrical systems and associated infrastructure;
- identify recurring maintenance issues and bring these to the attention of the Clerk and Parish Council where appropriate;
- make recommendations regarding repairs, replacement or other necessary works.

Electric Vehicle Charging Point

- monitor the condition and operation of the Parish Council's electric vehicle charging point;
- identify maintenance, repair or replacement requirements;
- liaise with the relevant provider or contractor through the Clerk where appropriate;
- identify recurring operational issues and report these to the Parish Council;
- make recommendations regarding maintenance or replacement where required.

Workshop and Equipment

- monitor the condition, security and suitability of the Parish Council workshop;
- identify maintenance, repair and security requirements;
- maintain an overview of Parish Council-owned tools, machinery and equipment associated with the workshop and other operational activities;
- identify equipment requiring servicing, repair, replacement or disposal;

- consider whether existing equipment remains fit for purpose and provides value for money;
- identify requirements for new or replacement equipment and make recommendations to the Parish Council where expenditure or formal approval is required.

Bus Stops

- monitor the condition and appearance of bus stops and associated infrastructure where these fall within the Parish Council's responsibility;
- identify cleaning, maintenance, repair and replacement requirements;
- consider matters relating to bus shelters, seating, signage and associated facilities;
- liaise with the relevant authority, bus operator or other responsible organisation where responsibility falls outside the Parish Council;
- bring significant maintenance or replacement requirements to the attention of the Parish Council.

Financial matters

The Working Group may make recommendations regarding expenditure associated with the facilities and assets within its remit.

Where appropriate, recommendations should include sufficient information to allow the Parish Council to make an informed decision, including estimated costs, available budget and any ongoing maintenance implications.

No expenditure may be incurred without prior approval by the Parish Council unless specifically authorised by a resolution of the Council or under the Clerk's delegated authority where applicable.

Reporting

The Working Group shall report to the Parish Council as required and may provide updates through the Clerk's report or a separate Working Group report.

Reports should include:

- progress made since the previous report;
- outstanding maintenance or other actions;
- significant issues identified;
- matters referred to external authorities;
- recommendations requiring Parish Council approval; and
- any anticipated expenditure.

Review and duration

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Parish Council as necessary to ensure that they remain appropriate to the Council's governance arrangements and current responsibilities.

The Working Group shall continue until:

- the Parish Council resolves to amend or replace these arrangements; or
- the Parish Council resolves that the Working Group is no longer required.



EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Email: clerk@earlscolne-pc.gov.uk

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Terms of reference – Section 106 Working Group

Purpose

The Section 106 Working Group (“the Working Group”) is established by Earls Colne Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) to oversee and support the consideration, monitoring and development of Parish Council priorities in relation to Section 106 contributions and applications.

The Working Group shall support the Parish Council in identifying appropriate Section 106 priorities, reviewing relevant opportunities and making recommendations regarding the use of Section 106 contributions.

Objectives

- The objectives of the Working Group are to:
- maintain an overview of Section 106 opportunities and applications relevant to the parish;
- identify community infrastructure priorities which may appropriately be supported through Section 106 contributions;
- review information provided by the relevant planning authority and other bodies and identify matters requiring Parish Council consideration;
- develop and bring forward proposals for the use of Section 106 contributions for formal consideration by the Parish Council;
- monitor progress of agreed Section 106 projects and report any issues or changes to the Parish Council.

Status

The Working Group is an advisory working group of the Parish Council.

It has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, incur expenditure, enter into contracts, hold funds, or commit the Parish Council to any course of action without the correct delegation. All recommendations of the Working Group shall be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration and formal approval.

Membership

The Working Group shall consist of Parish Councillors appointed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council may appoint non-councillor members to the Working Group, including other members of the community with relevant experience or expertise where necessary.

the Parish Council may appoint or remove members of the Working Group at any time.

Lead Member

The Lead Member of the Working Group shall be appointed by the Parish Council.

The Clerk to the Parish Council shall provide administrative and professional support to the Working Group.

Quorum

As the Working Group is advisory only, no formal quorum is required.

Any recommendations made by the Working Group should, where practicable, reflect a clear consensus of its members.

Meetings

The Working Group shall meet as required to progress its work.

Meetings may be informal and are not subject to the formal notice and public access requirements applicable to meetings of the Parish Council.

Brief notes of meetings may be kept where appropriate.

The Parish Council's Code of Conduct applies to all Councillors participating in the Working Group.

Where sensitive or confidential matters are discussed, these shall be handled in accordance with the Parish Council's confidentiality and data protection policies.

Remit

The Working Group shall:

- review Section 106 applications, opportunities and information relevant to the parish;
- identify and prioritise potential projects for Section 106 funding and make recommendations to the Parish Council;
- liaise, where appropriate and within the authority of the Council, with the relevant planning authority, developers and other stakeholders;
- monitor the progress of Section 106 projects approved by the Parish Council;
- report regularly to the Parish Council and make recommendations for formal approval.

Financial matters

The Working Group may make recommendations regarding expenditure associated with Section 106-funded projects and proposals, including any associated expenditure requiring Parish Council approval.

No expenditure may be incurred without prior approval by the Parish Council unless specifically authorised by a resolution of the Council or under the Clerk's delegated authority where applicable.

Reporting

The Working Group shall report to each ordinary meeting of the Parish Council, or more frequently if required.

Reports shall include progress made, issues arising, recommendations requiring Council approval, and any anticipated expenditure.

Review and duration

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Parish Council as necessary. The Working Group shall continue until:

- the new, established and appropriate governance and transition arrangements have been implemented;

or

- the Parish Council resolves that the Working Group is no longer required.

DRAFT



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EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Terms of Reference – Community Engagement & Events Working Group

Purpose

The Community Engagement & Events Working Group (“the Working Group”) is established by Earls Colne Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) to support the Council in developing effective community engagement, communication and participation, and in planning and coordinating Parish Council events and community activities.

The Working Group will provide a structured forum for developing ideas, coordinating activities and bringing recommendations to the Parish Council, helping to ensure that residents are informed about Council activities and have appropriate opportunities to engage with their Parish Council.

Objectives

The objectives of the Working Group are to:

- develop and support meaningful opportunities for engagement between the Parish Council and the local community;
- support the delivery and development of Parish Council community events and activities;
- oversee the planning and development of the Councillor Clinics;
- support the Parish Council’s involvement in the Four Colnes Show;
- coordinate and support Parish Council Christmas events and associated seasonal activities;
- develop, maintain and review the Parish Council’s Communications Plan;
- consider how the Parish Council can improve the way it communicates with residents, community groups, organisations and local businesses;
- identify opportunities to increase awareness of Parish Council services, projects, consultations, meetings and community initiatives;
- consider feedback received from residents and identify matters that may require further consideration by the Parish Council; and
- make recommendations to the Parish Council where a formal Council decision, expenditure or approval is required.

Status

The Working Group is an advisory working group of the Parish Council.

It has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, incur expenditure, enter into contracts, hold funds, or commit the Parish Council to any course of action without the correct delegation.

All recommendations of the Working Group shall be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration and formal approval where required.

The Working Group shall operate within the statutory responsibilities and policies of the Parish Council and shall have regard to the **Local Government Act 1972**, the **Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**, the **Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2015**, the Council’s Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other relevant Council policies.

Membership

The Working Group shall consist of Parish Councillors appointed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council may appoint non-councillor members to the Working Group, including representatives of local community groups, organisations or businesses, or other members of the community with relevant experience or expertise where appropriate.

The Parish Council may appoint or remove members of the Working Group at any time.

Lead Member

The Lead Member of the Working Group shall be appointed by the Working Group.

The Clerk to the Parish Council shall provide administrative and professional support to the Working Group and shall advise on matters of legal compliance, procedure, expenditure and Council authority where required.

Quorum

As the Working Group is advisory only, no formal quorum is required.

Any recommendations made by the Working Group should, where practicable, reflect a clear consensus of its members.

Meetings

The Working Group shall meet as required to progress its work and in accordance with the timetable of events and communications activity.

Meetings may be informal and are not subject to the formal notice and public access requirements applicable to meetings of the Parish Council.

Brief notes of meetings and agreed actions may be kept where appropriate.

Remit

The Working Group will:

1. **Community Engagement**
 - consider and develop opportunities for residents to engage with the Parish Council;
 - support the development of accessible and effective methods of community engagement;
 - consider feedback, suggestions and ideas received from residents and community organisations;
 - identify opportunities to work with local community groups, organisations and businesses;
 - support initiatives intended to increase community participation and awareness of Parish Council activities.
2. **Councillor Clinics**
 - oversee the planning and organisation of Councillor Clinics;
 - consider the frequency, format, location and promotion of Councillor Clinics;
 - identify recurring issues or themes raised through the Clinics and bring matters requiring Council consideration to the Parish Council;
 - review participation and feedback to ensure the Clinics remain useful and accessible to residents.
3. **Four Colnes Show**
 - support the Parish Council's involvement in the Four Colnes Show;
 - consider the Council's presence, activities, displays and engagement opportunities;
 - coordinate practical arrangements with the event organisers where appropriate and within the authority of the Council;
 - consider opportunities to promote the work of the Parish Council and encourage residents to engage with the Council.
4. **Christmas Events**
 - plan and coordinate Parish Council Christmas events and activities;
 - consider event format, activities, entertainment, community involvement and practical arrangements;
 - work with relevant community groups, volunteers, businesses and other organisations where appropriate;
 - identify any permissions, insurance, risk assessments, contractor requirements or expenditure requiring consideration by the Parish Council;
 - review each event following completion and identify improvements for future years.
5. **Communications Plan**
 - Oversee the development of the Parish Council's Communications Plan;
 - consider the improvements needed for the Parish Council's communication channels, including the website, social media, noticeboards and other appropriate methods of communication;
 - consider how communications can be made clear, timely, accessible and consistent;

- review the effectiveness of communications and recommend improvements to the Parish Council;
- support the Clerk in maintaining an appropriate forward communications schedule.

6. Events and Community Initiatives

- identify opportunities for new Parish Council events, activities and community initiatives;
- consider proposals brought forward by residents, councillors, community groups or local organisations;
- review practical requirements, costs, risks and resources associated with proposed activities;
- make recommendations to the Parish Council where formal approval is required.

7. Reporting and Recommendations

- maintain an overview of planned engagement activities and events;
- identify actions requiring Council approval and bring recommendations forward in sufficient time for decisions to be made;
- report regularly to the Parish Council on progress, issues arising and future priorities.

Financial Matters

The Working Group may make recommendations regarding expenditure associated with community engagement, communications, Councillor Clinics, the Four Colnes Show, Christmas events and other community activities within its remit.

No expenditure may be incurred without prior approval by the Parish Council unless specifically authorised by a resolution of the Council or under the Clerk's delegated authority where applicable.

Any proposed expenditure should be considered alongside the Council's approved budget and Financial Regulations.

Reporting

The Working Group shall report to each ordinary meeting of the Parish Council, or more frequently where required due to forthcoming events or other time-sensitive matters.

Reports shall include:

- progress against agreed actions;
- upcoming events and engagement activities;
- matters requiring a decision or approval from the Parish Council;
- feedback or issues arising from community engagement;
- progress against the Communications Plan;
- anticipated expenditure; and
- any risks, resource requirements or other matters requiring Council consideration.

Review and Duration

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Parish Council as necessary.

The Working Group shall continue until:

- the new, established and appropriate governance and transition arrangements have been implemented; or
- the Parish Council resolves that the Working Group is no longer required.

St Andrews Church Clock

Just before the bells went away for refurbishment, the strike winding mechanism developed a fault, so during the last month or so before they went away, the hour strike didn't sound.

Our Clock engineers have diagnosed the electrical problem and ordered the replacement part. (A starter condenser). They plan to return within a couple of weeks to get the strike mechanism working again.

That means that when the bell engineers refit and reconnect the bell hammers, the clock will work as normal.

The clock people have told us that the hammers will need to be repositioned because the bells will be re hung at a slightly different height.

The Tower captain has assured us that all work needed to re connect the clock to the bells is the responsibility of the bell engineers.

The Clock engineers say that the hammers and operating system is showing signs of wear and is about due for refurbishment that should see the whole set up good for another 100 years or so.

They have provided a quote for the work in the region of £6500.00. This includes the already agreed sum of £1,250.00 for new operating wires.

We feel that the job should be done but not until the next financial year. We feel that the clock should be heard to be operating as normal as soon as possible purely because the longer the period of silence, the more likely it is that we will receive complaints about the noise.

We have agreed an extra £100.00 for two more starter condensers to keep in stock.

Bob Cook