



**EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER 2026 AT 7.00PM
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, YORK ROAD, EARLS COLNE, CO6 2RN**

In attendance:

Cllr Catherine Dennis
Cllr Ian Sparks
Cllr Laurence Hull
Sophie Blair-Walker – Clerk
Members of the public- 28

26/103. Election of Chair of the Planning Committee

It was resolved that Cllr Catherine Dennis be elected Chair of the Planning Committee.

Cllr Dennis took the Chair and continued with the meeting.

26/104. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr June Jemmett and Cllr Carol Lewis.

26/105. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Laurence Hull declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 26/02032/FUL – Colne Valley Golf Club, Station Road, Earls Colne.

In his written dispensation request, attached as Appendix 1, Cllr Hull explained that the golf club had been a client of his business for some years. He stated that this relationship would not affect his ability to discuss or vote on the application and requested permission to remain in the meeting and participate in the discussion and vote.

The Committee considered the request in accordance with Standing Orders 13(e) and 13(h), together with the relevant provisions of the Council's Code of Conduct.

It was resolved that Cllr Hull be granted a dispensation to remain in the meeting and participate in the discussion and vote on planning application 26/02032/FUL.

26/106. Public Participation Session

The Chair opened the public participation session and extended the usual 15-minute period to 30 minutes, with each speaker permitted up to three minutes. Residents were invited to share their views on the planning applications and

were encouraged to submit their own representations directly to Braintree District Council through its planning portal.

The Chair invited members of the public present at the meeting to indicate their views on the points raised by a show of hands. Members of the public were given the opportunity to express their support for or opposition to the proposal, and the responses were noted.

Comments made in respect of application 26/02163/OUT – Land North East of Station Road

Residents raised concerns regarding the proposed development of up to 80 dwellings, including:

- **Highways and traffic:** the additional traffic generated by the development, existing congestion, the capacity of local junctions and whether the traffic assessments adequately reflected actual conditions.
- **Pedestrian safety:** the adequacy of existing footways along Station Road, the proposed informal crossing and the safety of pedestrians in an area subject to a 40mph speed limit.
- **Local infrastructure:** the capacity of local schools, GP services, drainage, wastewater facilities and utilities to accommodate additional development.
- **Landscape and village character:** the loss of open countryside, the rural setting of the village and the potential urbanisation of the site.
- **Heritage:** the potential impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and concerns arising from the previous planning refusal and appeal.
- **Biodiversity and the environment:** the potential loss of wildlife habitats, trees and other natural features, and whether proposed mitigation would adequately address these impacts.
- **Housing need:** whether the development was justified by the identified housing need and whether its benefits outweighed the concerns raised.

A written statement was also read on behalf of a resident who was unable to attend by Cllr Rocha. It raised concerns about the sensitive rural landscape, the effectiveness of proposed planting, the assumptions used in traffic modelling, pedestrian safety, electricity infrastructure and the evidence supporting the affordable housing provision.

Comments made in respect to application 26/02032/FUL – Colne Valley Golf Club, Station Road

Residents raised concerns regarding the proposed golfers' accommodation and store room, particularly its location close to neighbouring residential properties.

Representations included concerns about:

- The reported separation distance of approximately 1.6 metres between the proposed accommodation and a neighbouring property boundary.
- Potential loss of privacy and impact on neighbouring outlook.
- Noise and disturbance from overnight guests, including late arrivals and departures.
- Noise from equipment and air-conditioning units.
- Lighting and vehicle headlights affecting nearby homes.
- How guest behaviour and occupancy would be managed to prevent disturbance.
- Parking and access arrangements when the golf club, functions and accommodation were in use.

- Whether an alternative location elsewhere within the golf club grounds would be more suitable.

Residents acknowledged the potential value of diversifying the golf club's business but expressed the view that the accommodation should be relocated away from neighbouring homes.

The Committee noted the representations made in respect of both applications.

26/107. Planning Application 26/02163/OUT – Land North East of Station Road, Earls Colne, Essex

Details: Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except access, for the erection of up to 80 dwellings, with public open space, landscaping, a sustainable drainage system (SuDS), associated infrastructure and a vehicular access from Station Road.

The discussion covered the proposed development's potential benefits, including the provision of housing, affordable housing and public open space, alongside concerns about highway capacity, pedestrian safety, the rural character of the village, heritage, biodiversity, drainage and local infrastructure.

Members raised particular concerns about:

- The anticipated increase in traffic and the capacity of the local highway network.
- The adequacy of pedestrian routes along Station Road and the safety of the proposed informal crossing.
- Existing vehicle speeds and the implications for pedestrians, including children.
- The potential impact on the rural character of the site and the setting of the Conservation Area.
- The capacity of local services and infrastructure, including GP provision and wastewater facilities.
- The adequacy of the submitted assessments and proposed mitigation.

The Committee also considered the previous planning application for development on the site and the concerns previously identified regarding landscape character and the setting of the Conservation Area.

It was resolved that the Parish Council object to planning application 26/02163/OUT on the grounds of highway and pedestrian safety, the impact on the rural character of the village and the setting of the Conservation Area, biodiversity concerns, and concerns regarding drainage and local infrastructure.

The detailed application report, setting out the considerations both for and against the proposal, is attached as Appendix 2.

26/108. Planning Application 26/02032/FUL – Colne Valley Golf Club, Station Road, Earls Colne, Essex, CO6 2ER

Details: Proposed golfers' accommodation and store room.

Members acknowledged the golf club's intention to diversify its business and the potential benefits of providing overnight accommodation for visitors. However, concerns were raised about the proposed location of the accommodation and its proximity to neighbouring residential properties.

The Committee discussed the potential impact on residential amenity, including privacy, outlook, noise and lighting, as well as the management of guests, the potential for disturbance during the evening and night, and parking arrangements.

Members expressed the view that the accommodation should be moved to a more suitable location within the golf club grounds, away from neighbouring homes, and that appropriate management arrangements would be necessary to minimise disturbance.

It was resolved that the Parish Council object to planning application 26/02032/FUL because of the proposed siting and proximity of the accommodation to neighbouring properties, the potential impact on residential amenity, and concerns regarding the management of guest noise and light disruption.

The proposal was carried, with an abstention recorded from Cllr Hull.

The detailed application report, setting out the considerations both for and against the proposal, is attached as Appendix 3.

26/109. General Information – Items for Discussion

It was agreed that the Council's objections to the planning applications should be made available on the Council's website, with a further update shared through the Council's social media channels so that residents could access the information.

Members also encouraged residents to consider joining the Parish Council to help fill the existing councillor vacancies and support the Council's work.

The Chair and members thanked those involved for the time and effort spent reviewing the planning applications and preparing the supporting reports.

No decisions were made under this item.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.39pm.

Appendices:

- **Appendix 1:** Written dispensation request from Cllr Laurence Hull.
- **Appendix 2:** Planning application report – 26/02163/OUT, Land North East of Station Road.
- **Appendix 3:** Planning application report – 26/02032/FUL, Colne Valley Golf Club.

Dear Clerk,

I would like to request a dispensation in relation to the agenda item concerning the golf club at the forthcoming planning meeting on 9th October 2026.

My interest arises from my connection with the golf club for the following reason - Colne Valley Golf Club have been and are a client of my business, however this relationship will have no bearing on my ability to discuss or vote on the application being discussed. I am requesting permission to remain in the meeting and participate in the discussion and vote on this specific agenda item.

Kind regards,

Laurence



**EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT- 9TH OCTOBER 2026
STATION ROAD — 26/02163/OUT: UP TO 80 HOMES**

1. Proposal and site

Gladman proposes up to 80 homes north of Station Road, with a new access, open space, landscaping and drainage. 40% affordable housing is proposed — 32 affordable homes if all 80 homes are built.

Source: Planning and Affordable Housing Statement, paragraphs 3.1–3.4.

The 5.11-hectare site is paddock/arable land south of Riverside Business Park. It lies outside the settlement boundary and north of the Earls Colne Conservation Area, with four protected trees along Station Road.

Source: paragraphs 2.2–2.4, 2.12 and 5.10.

Access is the only matter being considered in detail now. Layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are reserved for later approval, so the layout shown is illustrative.

Source: paragraphs 3.2 and 3.5.

Gladman argues that proximity to village services makes this a sustainable location. That supports its case, but whether 80 homes are acceptable also depends on the impacts considered in the following sections.

Applicant's case: paragraphs 2.5–2.9.

2. Housing need and the principle of development

Gladman's case: Braintree cannot demonstrate a five-year housing supply, so these homes would help meet an unmet need. Gladman acknowledges that the site lies outside the settlement boundary and conflicts with Local Plan Policy LPP1.

Applicant's Planning Statement, paragraphs 5.10–5.14.

BDC's stated position: Braintree's committee report of 2nd June 2026 states that it cannot demonstrate a five-year housing supply. However, its January 2025 position statement reported 5.32 years. We have not located an updated published calculation quantifying the current supply or shortfall.

Clarification required: Braintree should provide its current supply figure, assessment date, housing requirement, applicable buffer and deliverable housing trajectory, explaining the change from the January 2025 position.

Sources: BDC Planning Committee report, 2 June 2026, paragraph 13.1.2; Five-Year Housing Supply Position Statement 2024–2029, January 2025.

Finding: There is evidence of a district-wide housing-supply shortfall and evidence of site-specific constraints. Neither settles the application by itself. We need to assess whether the current proposal addresses the previous concerns and how the housing benefits weigh against any remaining harm.

3. Previous 53-home proposal on this site — relevant planning history

An earlier application for 53 homes was refused in September 2020, and its appeal was dismissed in November 2021.

Source: Appeal APP/Z1510/W/21/3267825, opening details and paragraph 1.

Gladman's case: Changes to national policy, housing supply and the proposed layout mean the new application should be assessed differently.

Source: Planning Statement, paragraphs 2.17–2.18.

Evidence supporting Gladman: The inspector did not uphold every concern. They found no harm to the significance of Meadowcroft or Station House and considered replacement planting could largely mitigate the loss of boundary trees and hedgerow.

Source: Appeal decision, paragraphs 15 and 23–25.

Evidence supporting village concerns: The inspector nevertheless found that development would urbanise the site, harm its semi-rural character and intrude into the countryside. They also identified harm to the conservation area's setting. These concerns went beyond the loss of boundary planting.

Source: Appeal decision, paragraphs 8–11 and 20–28.

Finding: The previous refusal does not automatically determine this application. However, Gladman needs to demonstrate how its revised proposal addresses those findings. Increasing the proposal from 53 to 80 homes makes that comparison particularly important.

4. Housing and public benefits

Gladman's case: The scheme would provide up to 80 homes, including 32 affordable homes if all 80 are built, alongside public open space, an orchard and play facilities. Gladman argues that the housing benefits deserve substantial weight.

Source: Planning Statement, paragraphs 3.4 and 6.3–6.5.

Evidence supporting the proposal: Additional homes would contribute towards Braintree's identified housing-supply shortfall. The proposed 40% affordable housing is a clear potential benefit. Open space and play facilities could also benefit existing residents.

Source: BDC committee report, 2 June 2026, paragraph 13.1.2; Planning Statement, paragraph 3.4.

Limitations: The affordable homes' sizes and tenure—such as rented housing or shared ownership—are not yet agreed. The draft obligations also leave the detailed delivery and long-term management of open space to be settled.

Source: Planning Statement, paragraph 6.6 and Appendix A.

Finding: These benefits should be recognised, but their delivery needs to be secured. We should seek clarity on the affordable housing mix and how it meets local needs, together with arrangements for delivering and maintaining the public facilities.

5. Traffic, access and pedestrian safety

Gladman's case: The development would generate approximately 55 vehicle movements in the morning peak and 44 in the evening peak. Its consultant concludes that the access would operate comfortably within capacity and the transport impact would not be severe.

Source: Transport Assessment, paragraphs 5.2–5.5 and 7.5–7.6.

Supporting evidence: The estimates use traffic surveys from the neighbouring Bourne Brook View development. Modelling tests the proposed access in 2031. New footways and an informal crossing with dropped kerbs and tactile paving are also proposed.

Source: paragraphs 4.10–4.12, 5.2 and 6.2.

Concerns and gaps: The capacity results presented concern the **site access**, rather than demonstrating how the High Street, Halstead Road and the mini-roundabout at the bottom of Church Hill would cope. Earlier modelling indicated that the Church Hill mini-roundabout would be over capacity by 2033. Braintree and Essex Highways should confirm whether that forecast remains applicable and how the additional traffic from this proposal has been assessed against it. Recorded 85th-percentile speeds were 37.2mph northbound and 37.3mph southbound, and pedestrians heading towards the village would need to cross Station Road where the existing footway changes sides. The proposed crossing would be informal (dropped kerb/tactile pavements – no zebra crossing or traffic lights).

Source: Transport Assessment, Table 4.2 and paragraphs 4.7–4.14.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit identifies potential conflicts involving refuse and other large vehicles turning at the proposed access, including possible overrunning of the opposing carriageway or footway. The designer disagrees with enlarging the junction and considers the proposed arrangements acceptable. Essex Highways should confirm whether it accepts that response and whether any further safeguards are required.

The audit also raised crossing visibility and vegetation concerns; a pedestrian visibility drawing has subsequently been provided, whose acceptability and maintenance arrangements should be confirmed.

Source: Transport Assessment, Appendix A7, Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and designer's response.

The assessment provides evidence that the proposed access could accommodate the predicted traffic. It does not, by itself, resolve concerns about wider junction capacity or pedestrian safety.

We should seek Essex Highways' assessment of the informal crossing, clarification of the earlier forecast that the Church Hill mini-roundabout would be over capacity by 2033, and confirmation that the additional traffic and

cumulative development impacts have been adequately assessed, with any necessary mitigation identified and secured.

Braintree's 2025 Issues and Options document still identifies the Church Hill junction improvement, recording planning permission as unknown, no funding and no construction progress.

Braintree Local Plan — Preferred Option Assessment, section 5.2.13, paragraph 106, printed page 31 (March 2017)

BDC Local Plan Review — Issues and Options 2025. PDF page 48, Table 5:

Project	Planning permission	Funding	Construction progress
A1124 – Church Hill, Earls Colne	Unknown	No	None

Residents report congestion, discontinuous footways, school-time pressures and horse-crossing activity near the site. Essex Highways should address these existing conditions alongside the proposed access and cumulative traffic.

6. Landscape and heritage

Gladman's case: Retained vegetation, new planting and an open corridor along the eastern boundary would help the development fit its surroundings and reduce harm compared with the previous scheme. Its landscape consultant considers the proposal acceptable.

Source: Planning Statement, paragraphs 5.29–5.31; Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, paragraphs 6.6–6.10.

Supporting evidence: Existing boundary vegetation provides screening, and the landscape assessment identifies limited views from the wider countryside. The proposed eastern corridor could help retain openness beside the conservation area.

Source: Landscape Assessment, paragraphs 6.8–6.9; Planning Statement, paragraph 5.30.

Contrary evidence: The applicant's own landscape assessment identifies major to moderate adverse visual effects from Valley Croft, Brabazon House and the Lodge. Its planning statement also acknowledges harm to the conservation area, although it considers this low. The previous inspector found that developing the open site would harm its semi-rural character and the conservation area's setting.

Source: Landscape Assessment, paragraph 5.14; Planning Statement, paragraph 5.31; appeal decision, paragraphs 8–11 and 20–28.

Finding: Screening and the revised layout may reduce some effects, but the applicant does not demonstrate an absence of harm. The key question is whether the changes sufficiently address the inspector's concerns and whether the public benefits outweigh the remaining harm.

7. Ecology and biodiversity

Gladman's case: Habitat creation on site, supplemented by off-site biodiversity provision, would deliver an overall **10% biodiversity net gain**.

Source: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Executive Summary.

Supporting evidence: The assessment predicts a 13.54% gain in hedgerow units, with new planting and habitat creation. It identifies a route to meeting the overall requirement through additional off-site provision.

Source: Executive Summary and Conclusions.

Concerns and gaps: The submitted biodiversity report states a 35.19% on-site habitat-unit loss, while the submitted metric spreadsheet's saved headline results show a 29.10% loss. Braintree's ecologist should reconcile these figures and confirm the habitat trading requirements and suitable off-site provision. The 13.54% hedgerow-unit gain is measured separately and does not cancel out the habitat-unit loss.

Sources: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Executive Summary and Conclusions; Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, Headline Results.

The report's draft gain plan identifies a need for 13.51 off-site habitat units, but leaves the supplier, location, register reference and securing arrangements unspecified.

Source: Appendix C, question 4.9 and section 7.

Potential local provision: Braintree's September 2026 Local Plan Submission Draft identifies Earls Colne Farm (EARL2123) as a biodiversity net gain site. We should ask whether suitable provision there could meet this application's requirements. No connection with Gladman's proposal has been established.

Source: Local Plan Submission Draft, September 2026, Earls Colne West, Inset 20; PDF page 241, with map key on PDF page 216.

Finding: The submitted biodiversity report and metric spreadsheet contain different habitat-loss figures. These need reconciling, alongside confirmation of the off-site provision.

8. Flood risk and drainage

Gladman's case: The Flood Risk Assessment places the site in Flood Zone 1 and proposes controlled surface-water discharge to the eastern boundary ditch. Two attenuation basins, supplemented by drainage features within the housing plots, would accommodate the calculated 1-in-100-year rainfall event plus 45% climate-change allowance. Foul drainage would be pumped to the sewer in De Vere Road.

Source: Planning Statement, paragraphs 5.91–5.94.

Concerns and gaps: Anglian Water's response included in the Flood Risk Assessment states that Halstead Water Recycling Centre does not currently have capacity to accommodate the additional flows. It identifies planned investment during 2025–2030 and recommends written confirmation of sufficient treatment capacity before occupation. That recommended condition would cease to apply if first occupation occurs after April 2030.

Separately, Anglian Water indicates that the proposed connection to the local sewer network would not cause unacceptable flood risk. The outstanding question is therefore whether sufficient sewage treatment capacity will be available when the homes are occupied, and how this will be secured.

Finding: A substantive drainage strategy has been submitted. BDC should confirm Essex County Council's consultation response on the surface-water scheme and ensure sufficient sewage treatment capacity before occupation, together with appropriate final drainage design and long-term maintenance arrangements.

Sources: Flood Risk Assessment, sections 4–6 and Flood Risk Assessment, sections 3.10, 5.3, 5.6–5.8 and 6; Appendix G, "Used Water Assessment"; Appendix H.

Maintenance responsibilities: Appendix H incorrectly refers to Thurrock Council in paragraphs 5.5, 7.2 and 7.5, although Essex County Council is the relevant highway and Lead Local Flood Authority. These references should be corrected and the final drainage ownership and maintenance responsibilities confirmed.

Residents report flooding, standing water, leaks and icy conditions. These observations should inform the assessment, while distinguishing surface-water runoff, sewer problems and water-main leaks.

9. Services, infrastructure and living conditions

Gladman's case: The additional population would be proportionate to the village. Open space and walking routes would provide benefits, while appropriate separation distances and an acoustic barrier would protect living conditions.

Source: Planning Statement, paragraphs 5.53, 5.71 and 5.96–5.97.

Supporting information: The proposal includes open space, pedestrian connections and noise mitigation beside the industrial estate. These are practical measures, although their effectiveness depends on the final design.

Source: paragraphs 3.4 and 5.71.

Concerns and gaps: Proximity to schools and healthcare does not establish that they have spare capacity. We need the relevant education and NHS responses to identify additional demand and any necessary provision. Appendix A leaves further contributions to the consultation process and does not specify education or healthcare funding.

Source: Planning Statement, Appendix A and paragraphs 5.71 and 5.96–5.97.

Finding: We cannot yet conclude either that services can accommodate the development or that they cannot. Any identified infrastructure needs and necessary mitigation should be secured, with evidence that acceptable living conditions can be achieved.

The noise assessment considers industrial activities, including HGV and forklift movements, and concludes that acceptable living conditions can be achieved with mitigation, including a 50-metre separation from Riverside Business Park and a four-metre acoustic barrier. It assumes the businesses operate during daytime hours.

The Riverside Business Park owner describes established manufacturing noise, early deliveries and forklift activity. BDC's Environmental Health team should confirm that the assessment adequately represents actual operations and that the necessary mitigation will be secured, protecting future residents and existing businesses.

Source: Noise Impact Assessment, sections 1.2, 4.4 and 6.1; Riverside Business Park owner's representation.

10. Local Plan review: why Station Road was not recommended for allocation

Braintree's assessment: The June 2025 report assessed the site as EARL2126 and recommended against allocating it for development.

Reasons: Officers identified protected trees along the southern boundary that could constrain the layout, an approximately 10-metre slope creating potential engineering and design challenges, and the previous refusal and dismissed appeal, whose issues they considered unresolved.

Source: Local Plan Sub-Committee report, 5 June 2025, paragraphs 3.64–3.67; recommendation 8, paragraph 2.10.

Relevant earlier findings: The appeal inspector found that development would urbanise the open site, harm its semi-rural character and intrude into the countryside. They also found harm to the setting and significance of Earls Colne Conservation Area.

Source: Appeal APP/Z1510/W/21/3267825, paragraphs 8–11 and 20–28.

Finding: The recommendation against allocation does not automatically determine this application. However, it identifies specific concerns that the current proposal needs to address. We should examine what has changed since that assessment and whether the revised scheme and supporting evidence overcome those concerns.

11. Overall findings and committee discussion

These are preliminary findings from the evidence reviewed, presented for committee discussion before we agree the Parish Council's response.

Benefits: The proposal would contribute up to 80 homes towards the district's housing shortfall, including 32 affordable homes if the full scheme is delivered. Public open space and play facilities are also proposed.

Source: Planning Statement, paragraphs 3.4 and 6.3–6.6; BDC Planning Committee report, 2 June 2026, paragraph 13.1.2.

Principal concerns: The previous inspector identified landscape and conservation-area harm. Braintree's June 2025 assessment still considered the earlier issues unresolved. The committee needs to consider whether the revised proposal adequately addresses those findings.

Source: Appeal decision, paragraphs 8–11 and 20–28; Local Plan Sub-Committee report, 5 June 2025, paragraphs 3.64–3.67.

Outstanding evidence: Our review still requires clarification of wider traffic impacts and pedestrian safety, drainage, infrastructure capacity, noise mitigation and the delivery of off-site biodiversity provision. A gap in our review should not be treated as proof that the applicant has failed to provide the information.

For discussion: Having considered the evidence and residents' views, what benefits and harms does the committee identify? Which concerns can be addressed through conditions or legal obligations, and which remain fundamental to the acceptability of development on this site?

EXAMPLE REASONS TO SUPPORT:

Reasons in favour of the Station Road proposal:

- **Additional housing:** up to 80 homes would contribute towards Braintree's identified housing-supply shortfall.
- **Affordable housing:** the proposed 40% would provide 32 affordable homes if all 80 are built, subject to securing their tenure, mix and delivery.
- **Access to village facilities:** proximity to shops, services and employment supports the applicant's case for the location.
- **Public open space:** proposed open space, an orchard and play facilities could benefit new and existing residents, subject to access and maintenance arrangements.
- **Pedestrian improvements:** proposed footways and connections could improve walking provision, subject to confirmation that the crossing arrangements are safe.
- **Economic benefits:** construction and spending by future residents could support employment and local businesses.

Potential benefits requiring further confirmation:

- **Overall biodiversity gain:** the applicant proposes 10% net gain, but this depends on securing suitable off-site provision alongside an on-site habitat loss.
- **Landscaping:** retained vegetation, planting and the eastern open corridor could reduce some impacts, although they would not establish an absence of landscape or heritage harm.

These are reasons to weigh in favour, rather than confirmation that they outweigh the scheme's harms.

EXAMPLE REASONS TO OBJECT:

1. **Harm to landscape and village character:** development would replace an open site with housing, roads and hardstanding. The previous inspector found harmful urbanisation and intrusion into the countryside.
Appeal decision, paragraphs 8–11.
2. **Harm to the conservation area's setting:** the open land contributes to Earls Colne's historic rural setting. The previous inspector identified heritage harm, and the current applicant acknowledges some harm.
Appeal decision, paragraphs 20–28; Planning Statement, paragraph 5.31.
3. **Adverse visual effects:** the applicant's landscape assessment identifies major to moderate adverse effects from Valley Croft, Brabazon House and the Lodge.
Landscape Assessment, paragraph 5.14.
4. **Conflict with the settlement boundary policy:** the site lies outside the settlement boundary, and Gladman acknowledges conflict with Policy LPP1. This must be weighed alongside housing need and other considerations.
Planning Statement, paragraphs 5.10–5.14.

Concerns requiring further evidence before stating them as firm objections:

5. **Wider traffic and cumulative impacts:** the access modelling does not itself establish that the village's wider junctions can accommodate additional traffic.

6. **Pedestrian safety:** the proposed informal crossing needs scrutiny against recorded speeds of approximately 37mph and the route into the village.
Source: Transport Assessment, Table 4.2 and paragraphs 4.7–4.14.
7. **On-site biodiversity loss:** Both the report and spreadsheet predict an on-site habitat-unit loss, but their figures differ. These require reconciliation. Achieving the proposed overall gain depends on suitable off-site provision, whose location and securing arrangements remain unspecified in the reviewed draft.
Sources: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Executive Summary and Conclusions; Appendix C, question 4.9 and section 7; Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, Headline Results.
8. **Infrastructure, drainage and noise:** Anglian Water's appended report identifies insufficient treatment capacity at Halstead Water Recycling Centre and recommends an occupation safeguard pending sufficient capacity. Seek current confirmation of that position, Essex's surface-water consultation response, and the outstanding infrastructure evidence.

The strongest evidenced grounds concern landscape, visual impact and heritage. Highways concerns are supported by historic modelling and require an updated assessment.



**EARLS COLNE PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT- 9TH OCTOBER 2026
COLNE VALLEY GOLF CLUB — 26/02032/FUL**

Prepared for committee discussion. These are preliminary findings based on the documents reviewed, rather than an agreed Parish Council position.

1. Proposal and site

The application proposes ten guest accommodation units in two single-storey blocks, together with an integrated store, landscaping and associated works. The floor plan shows eight one-bedroom units and two two-bedroom units, with no kitchens shown. The applicant should confirm the maximum guest occupancy.

Sources: Planning Statement, pages 8–9; Proposed Plans and Elevations, MG/7/26/02 Rev B; Proposed Floor Plans, MG/7/26/03.

The 0.13-hectare site is immediately beside the existing clubhouse and car park. It includes managed grass and planting, with residential properties beyond its northern and eastern boundaries. The existing Station Road entrance and club parking would be used; no new highway access is proposed.

Source: Planning Statement, “Introduction” and “Context of Site”, pages 4–5.

Applicant’s case: The rooms would serve golfers, societies, corporate and function guests, and remain operationally tied to the golf club. The applicant presents this as a modest addition supporting the existing business.

Source: Planning Statement, pages 4 and 9.

Finding: The location beside existing club facilities supports the proposed business relationship. However, the proximity to neighbouring homes requires careful assessment of privacy, noise, lighting and building height. The proposed users include function guests as well as golfers, so the assessment needs to reflect that wider use.

Source: Planning Statement, page 5 and “Proposed Development”, page 9.

2. Business justification and intended use

The applicant says the ten guest accommodation units would support the existing golf club by providing overnight accommodation for golfers, visiting societies, corporate groups and guests attending functions or events.

The Planning Statement identifies potential benefits, including additional visitor spending, housekeeping and guest-service work, and fewer journeys between the club and other accommodation.

These are reasonable potential benefits. However, national golf-tourism figures do not establish the level of demand at Colne Valley Golf Club. The statement itself says a business plan should accompany the application, showing accommodation enquiries, bookings lost, anticipated occupancy, costs, staffing and management arrangements.

Finding: There is a credible business rationale, but the documents reviewed do not yet demonstrate the club-specific demand or long-term viability. Further evidence should be requested.

The intended use also needs clarification. Although described as golfers' accommodation, the statement includes function and corporate guests. Any permission should clearly define the relationship with the golf club, alongside arrangements for bookings, length of stay and overnight management.

Source: Planning Statement, pages 9–11 and 15–16. PLANNING_STATEMENT-2880680.pdf

3. Siting, design and character

Applicant's case: The two single-storey blocks, pitched roofs and weatherboarding would fit the existing golf club setting. The applicant says their low height and surrounding buildings and vegetation would limit their visual impact.

Source: Planning Statement, "Design and character", page 16, and "Landscape", page 18.

Evidence: The submitted elevations show the seven-unit block stepping down with the sloping ground. This breaks up the roofline, but the buildings would still introduce a substantial length of built frontage beside neighbouring properties. Being single-storey does not, by itself, establish that the effect on those homes would be acceptable.

Source: Proposed Plans and Elevations, drawing MG/7/26/02 Rev B; Planning Statement, page 5.

The heritage consultant's response finds no effect on the significance of nearby designated heritage assets and raises no objection on heritage grounds. It considers the proposal sufficiently separated and screened from Earls Colne Conservation Area and Grade II listed Colne House.

Source: Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice, Place Services, 6 October 2026

Finding: The materials and single-storey form offer a reasonable starting point. The submitted site layout marks some separation distances and proposes boundary screening. However, the committee should seek confirmation of finished floor levels, roof heights and the relationship with neighbouring garden levels before concluding that privacy and outlook would be adequately protected.

Source: Proposed Site Layout, MG/7/26/01 Rev C; Proposed Plans and Elevations, MG/7/26/02 Rev B.

The relationship with the clubhouse explains the general location, but does not establish why this particular position beside homes is necessary.

4. Neighbouring homes: privacy, noise and lighting

Applicant's case: The Planning Statement says the single-storey buildings and existing boundary fence would protect neighbouring homes. It also says the rooms would be used for sleeping rather than congregation or socialising.

Source: Planning Statement, "Residential amenity", pages 16–17.

Residents' evidence: Residents at 35 and 41 Aubrey Close raise concerns about proximity, differing ground levels, overlooking, loss of outlook, external lighting and noise from guests and possible equipment. One describes existing conversations in the car park as clearly audible from their property.

The objection from Smudges, Station Road, identifies a further issue: evening and night-time disturbance from vehicles, speed bumps, telephone-operated gates and headlights close to living-room and bedroom windows. It also asks how guests returning on foot would be prevented from mistakenly using private residential entrances.

Sources: Objections from 35 Aubrey Close, forwarded 29 September 2026; 41 Aubrey Close; and Smudges, Station Road.

Assessment: Overnight accommodation could extend activity beyond the existing pattern of golf and occasional functions. Calling the rooms “sleeping accommodation” does not demonstrate that conversations, arrivals, departures and outdoor activity would be adequately controlled.

Residents' reports provide relevant local evidence, although predicted occupancy, vehicle numbers and future behaviour remain matters to verify.

Finding: The documents reviewed do not yet demonstrate that neighbouring living conditions would be adequately protected. Further information should cover boundary distances and levels, window positions, external lighting, equipment noise, evening access and an overnight management contact. Any proposed controls must be practical and enforceable.

5. Access, parking and traffic

Applicant's case: The accommodation would use the existing golf club entrance, internal drive and parking. The applicant expects modest additional traffic, with many guests already visiting for golf or events. Staying on site could avoid journeys to separate overnight accommodation.

Source: Planning Statement, “Location, relationship to the club and sustainable travel”, page 16, and “Access, parking and movement”, page 17.

Evidence and concerns: The application form records 106 existing and proposed car parking spaces, with no net increase. The site layout identifies ten existing spaces for accommodation guests, one per cabin. Essex Highways has no comments to make and considers the proposal consistent with national policy and its development management policies. The remaining question is how parking would operate when accommodation, golf activities and functions are busy together, alongside the effect of evening and night-time movements on nearby homes.

Sources: Application Form, section 10; Proposed Site Layout, MG/7/26/01 Rev C; ECC Highways consultation response.

Finding: Using the existing entrance is a practical advantage, but does not establish that additional use would be acceptable. The committee should request evidence of parking availability during simultaneous peak uses, expected guest movements and clear arrangements for evening vehicle and pedestrian access, including directions that protect the separate residential entrances.

The assessment should consider both traffic volume and its timing: a small number of late-night movements could still affect nearby homes.

6. Trees, ecology and biodiversity

Applicant's evidence: The tree report proposes removing group G1, described as small, young trees planted within the last two years. It assesses the landscape impact as low and says retained trees can be protected during construction through barriers, ground protection and the specified working methods.

Source: Tree Report, section 6.1, Table 4, and conclusions 11.1.2–11.1.3.

Independent assessment: Braintree's Ecology Officer raises **no objection, subject to mitigation and enhancement conditions**. The officer considers the ecological information sufficient and requires the survey's precautionary measures to be implemented, particularly to protect mammals and amphibians during construction.

Source: BDC Ecology consultation response, 2 October 2026.

The officer also accepts that this application is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain, recording that the site is below 0.2 hectares and does not affect priority habitat. However, bespoke biodiversity enhancements are still required, with an approved layout, installation before occupation and retention thereafter.

Source: BDC Ecology response, summary and recommended condition 2.

Finding: The ecology response supports the proposal on ecological grounds, provided its conditions are secured. Tree loss is acknowledged rather than avoided, so replacement planting and protection of retained trees should be clearly secured. The biodiversity exemption does not remove the need for the recommended wildlife safeguards and enhancements.

7. Flood risk and drainage

Applicant's case: The Planning Statement identifies the site as Flood Zone 1, with a low probability of river flooding, and reports low surface-water risk.

Source: Planning Statement, "Context of Site", page 5.

Evidence: Its policy checklist says sustainable drainage, controlled discharge and maintenance details are required, while marking the proposal as compliant. That entry does not itself demonstrate how drainage would work.

Source: Planning Statement, Appendix A, entry for policies LPP74–76.

Finding: Basic drainage arrangements have been identified. The application form proposes connecting foul drainage to the existing Anglian Water foul sewer running through the site, with surface water discharged through a soakaway.

Further confirmation should establish the suitability and capacity of these arrangements, including soakaway testing, detailed design and maintenance responsibilities, and demonstrate that runoff would not increase flood risk to neighbouring properties.

Sources: Application Form, sections 11–12; Planning Statement, Appendix A, policies LPP74–76.

8. Overall findings

The proposal could support an established local business, provide overnight accommodation and make use of existing club facilities. Braintree's Ecology Officer considers the ecological impacts acceptable, subject to mitigation and enhancement conditions.

Sources: Planning Statement, pages 15–17; BDC Ecology response, 2 October 2026.

The heritage consultant also raises no objection, and Essex Highways has no comments to make on the proposal. These responses support the application on their respective matters, while the effects of overnight activity on neighbouring living conditions still require assessment.

Sources: Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice, 6 October 2026; ECC Highways consultation response.

However, the evidence reviewed leaves important questions unresolved: the club-specific demand, the buildings' relationship to neighbouring gardens, evening and night-time disturbance, guest access, parking capacity and drainage.

Residents have provided specific accounts of existing noise and the close relationship between homes, boundaries and access gates. These concerns require a clear response from the applicant.

Sources: Planning Statement, pages 15–17 and Appendix A; objections from 35 and 41 Aubrey Close and Smudges, Station Road.

Overall finding: There is a reasonable business case in principle, but the information reviewed does not yet demonstrate that this particular layout and operation would adequately protect neighbouring residents.

The committee should consider requesting the missing evidence before agreeing its response. If it resolves to object, the reasons should focus on the unresolved effects on residential amenity and the evidence needed to assess them. Any conditions proposed to address those effects should be precise, practical and enforceable.

9. Reasons that could support the application - for committee discussion

For balance, the committee should also consider:

- **Support for an existing business:** Accommodation could help the club attract overnight golf, society and event bookings.
- **Visitor spending and employment:** Guests could support local businesses. The application form proposes three additional part-time employees, although the wider economic benefits have not been quantified.
Sources: Application Form, section 19; Planning Statement, pages 15–16.
- **Use of existing facilities:** The proposal sits beside the clubhouse and car park and uses the existing entrance.
- **Potentially fewer journeys:** Guests staying on site could avoid transfers to separate accommodation, depending on meal provision and their activities.
- **Single-storey design:** The proposed form limits building bulk, although its relationship with neighbouring gardens still requires assessment.
- **Conditional ecological acceptability:** Braintree's Ecology Officer raises no objection, provided mitigation and biodiversity enhancements are secured.

Sources: Planning Statement, pages 15–17; BDC Ecology response, 2 October 2026.

Finding: These benefits deserve consideration alongside residents' concerns. The central question is whether the proposed siting and management can deliver those benefits while adequately protecting neighbouring homes.

10. Potential reasons for objection — for committee discussion

If the committee decides to object, the evidence reviewed supports the following concerns:

- **Residential amenity:** Insufficient evidence that the proximity, building heights, ground levels and window positions would adequately protect neighbouring privacy and outlook.
- **Evening and night-time disturbance:** Insufficient assessment of noise from guests, vehicles, gates and equipment, together with lighting and headlights near homes.
- **Guest access and management:** Unclear arrangements for overnight supervision, complaints and pedestrian access, including measures to prevent guests using private residential entrances.
- **Parking management:** Although parking numbers and ten spaces for accommodation guests are identified, clarification is needed on availability when accommodation, golf activities and functions operate together. Essex Highways has not raised a highway concern.

Sources: Application Form, section 10; Proposed Site Layout, MG/7/26/01 Rev C; ECC Highways consultation response.

Further clarification should also be requested on club-specific demand, business viability and surface-water and foul drainage arrangements.

Sources: Planning Statement, pages 15–17 and Appendix A; submitted elevations; objections from 35 and 41 Aubrey Close and Smudges, Station Road.

Suggested position: On the information reviewed, the proposal has not yet demonstrated that it could operate in this location without unacceptable effects on neighbouring residents. These concerns should be addressed through further evidence and, where appropriate, clearly defined and enforceable controls.