

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at 8:00pm on the 12th May 2026 in the Braxted Pavilion

Present:

Cllrs C Knapman (Vice-Chairman), M Davis and L Holt; L Townend (Clerk); and one member of the public.

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, Cllr C Knapman presided over the meeting.

26/01 Election of Chairman

Nominations were called for the position of Chairman.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Cllr Richard Collins be elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Cllr Collins, being absent, had confirmed prior to the meeting their willingness to accept office if elected.

26/02 Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Resolved: That the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be signed at the next meeting of the Council.

26/03 Appointment of Vice Chairman

Nominations were called for the position of Vice Chairman.

Resolved: That Cllr Knapman be elected as Vice Chairman.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Collins.

26/04 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting, held on the 12th March 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

26/05 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they are required to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests which they know they might have in terms of business on the agenda. They were also reminded that they will need to repeat their declarations at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if required under the Code of Conduct which took effect in July 2022.

They were further reminded that any unforeseen interests must also be declared at the appropriate time.

No Declarations of Interests were made.

26/06 Maldon District Councillor Update

Cllr Siddal was unable to attend the meeting.

26/07 Briefing on Gigaclear Project in Great Braxted (Great Braxted Extension Project Name)

Andrew Lipski, Community Engagement Manager for Gigaclear, provided an update on the proposed broadband network expansion for Great Braxted and Beacon Hill.

Works are expected to commence shortly. Existing poles and ducting infrastructure owned by Openreach will be utilised where possible, reducing the need for extensive trenching works. Limited trenching may still be required within sections of the road and verge. Properties ordering the service will be connected via overhead cabling from existing poles, while new build properties will receive underground connections.

It was noted that Tiptree Road, from Beacon Hill, will require a temporary road closure whilst cabling works are undertaken.

Mr Lipski explained the Broadband Voucher Scheme, whereby residents taking up the service enable Gigaclear to reclaim subsidy funding from BDUK. A total of 49 resident vouchers are required from approximately 260 properties within the project area.

Indicative broadband package pricing was outlined, although final package details are still to be confirmed.

Gigaclear also offered the Pavilion a free Community Hub connection, including a standard installation and 900Mbps service. The arrangement would operate on a rolling 12-month contract, subject to the agreed conditions being met, including periodic promotion of the Community Hub via social media and display of the Gigaclear Community Hub logo. Administrative controls, including guest network access and content filtering, could be managed locally depending on the router installed.

The Vice Chairman thanked Andrew for the briefing.

26/08 Public Participation Session

A member of the public enquired about the current state of the roads and the numerous potholes.

It was noted that highway maintenance and pothole repairs are the responsibility of Essex County Council.

26/09 Bank Account

Resolved: That the council will maintain its current account with Unity Trust Bank and investment in the Public Sector Deposit Fund, managed by the CCLA.

26/10 Appointment of Signatories to the Council's Bank Account and Investment Fund

Resolved: That Cllrs Collins, Davis, Knapman and Miles will continue to be signatories on the Council's current and investment accounts.

26/11 To Appoint a Member to Review the Quarterly Bank Reconciliations

The Council's Financial Regulations (2.6) require the Council to appoint a Member, other than the Chair, to verify the bank reconciliations, once each quarter and at the end of the Financial year.

Resolved: That the Council reappointed Cllr Holt to verify the quarterly bank reconciliations.

26/12 To Appoint the Internal Auditor for the 2026/27 Financial Year

Resolved: That the Council will retain the services of Mrs Jan Stobart as the Council's internal auditor for the year 2026/27 at a cost of £195.

26/13 Parish Council Policy Documents

26/13/1 Standing Orders

Members reviewed the existing Standing Orders which are based on the 2025 NALC model.

Resolved: That the Council re-adopted the Standing Orders.

26/13/2 Financial Regulations

Members reviewed the existing Financial Regulations which are based on the 2025 NALC model.

Resolved: That the Council re-adopted the Financial Regulations.

26/13/3 Other Policies

Members reviewed and agreed to re-adopt the following policy documents without amendment:

1. Biodiversity Policy
2. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
3. Complaints Procedure
4. Equal Opportunities Statement
5. Data Protection Policy
6. Data Retention Policy
7. Grievance Procedure
8. IT Policy

9. Procurement Policy
10. Publication Scheme
11. Reserves Policy
12. Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy
13. Training Policy

Resolved: That the above policies be re-adopted by the Council.

26/14 Council Memberships and Subscription

The Council considered their current memberships and subscriptions and agreed to continue these for the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved: That the Council will continue membership of the following organisations for 2026/27:

1. Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) incorporating membership of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
2. CouncilWise
3. Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
4. Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

26/15 Financial Risk Assessment

Members reviewed the existing Financial Risk Assessment.

Resolved: That the Council re-adopted the Financial Risk Assessment for 2026/27.

26/16 Fixed Asset Register

The Council reviewed the fixed asset register

Resolved: That the Council agreed the items and values recorded on the fixed asset register for 2026/27.

26/17 Parish Council Insurance

Having entered into a 3-year long term agreement with Clear Councils in 2025, the Council approved the quote of £640.96 for insurance cover on all assets for 2026/27, noting this was £31.96 higher than the budgeted cost of £609. The difference will be met from Council reserves.

Resolved: That the council approved the 2026/27 insurance renewal from Clear Councils at a cost of £640.96.

26/18 Internal Audit Report

Members received the report from the internal auditor, noting the recommendations made and corrective actions proposed by the Clerk.

Resolved: That the Council approve the implementation of the corrective actions as recommended by the Clerk in response to the internal auditor's findings.

26/19 Annual Governance and Accountability Review 2025/26

26/19/1 Certificate of Exemption

Resolved: That the Council approved the Certificate of Exemption from a Limited Assurance Review for 2025/26 which was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

26/19/2 Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Resolved: That the Council received and noted the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2025/26.

26/19/3 Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

The Chairman read to the Council the statements contained in Section 1 of the Annual Return and the Council agreed that each statement had been complied with.

Resolved: That the Council approved the signing of Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and this was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

26/19/4 Section 2 Accounting Statement 2025/26

The Council agreed the financial data recorded in Section 2 of the Annual Return.

Resolved: That the Council approved Section 2, the Accounting Statements, of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and this was duly signed by the Chairman.

26/19/5 Dates of the Period of Public Rights

Confirmation of the dates of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights was provided to the Council.

Resolved: That the dates for the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights were noted to start on Wednesday the 3rd June and end on Tuesday the 14th July 2026.

26/20 Regular Payments

The Council received a list of regular direct debits and BACS payments to be authorised, in advance, in line with Financial Regulation 6.

Resolved: That the Council approved the following payments which will be made, outside of the meeting schedule, if required:

- A. Clerk's salary and expenses
- B. Cloud Next – domain registration and email provider
- C. CouncilWise membership
- D. Damon Wallace (Wallace Arboriculture & Groundcare) – grass cutting
- E. EALC

- F. Information Commissioner's Office
- G. HMRC payments
- H. Maldon District Council – TruCam patrol costs
- I. RCCE
- J. Sky Mobile – phone bill
- K. SLCC
- L. Unity Trust Bank – monthly service charge
- M. VCS Websites – annual hosting cost

26/21 Finance

26/21/1 Accounts for Payment

The Council approved the following payments:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
14/03/2026	CouncilWise	Charity Course	50.00	10.00	60.00
20/03/2026	Cllr Knapman	Refreshments for litter pick	29.44	0.00	29.44
24/03/2026	Sky Mobile	March mobile phone bill	6.00	0.00	6.00
27/03/2026	L Townend	March salary	368.53	0.00	368.53
27/03/2026	HMRC	PAYE costs	92.00	0.00	92.00
27/03/2026	L Townend	Feb - Mar expenses	69.98	0.00	69.98
31/03/2026	Unity Trust Bank	March service charge	6.00	0.00	6.00
02/04/2026	Wallace Arboriculture	March grounds maintenance	480.00	0.00	480.00
15/04/2026	Mrs K Blake	Easter event	140.83	0.00	140.83
21/04/2026	Tracy Clarke Tree Consultancy	Tree risk survey	820.00	164.00	984.00
21/04/2026	Maldon District Council	Q4 2025/26 TruCam costs	518.88	103.78	622.66
21/04/2026	EALC	2026/27 affiliation fees	138.37	0.00	138.37
21/04/2026	SLCC	2026/27 membership fee	37.90	0.00	37.90
22/04/2026	Sky mobile	Mobile phone bill- April	6.00	0.00	6.00
28/04/2026	L Townend	April salary	281.76	0.00	281.76
28/04/2026	HMRC	April PAYE costs	70.20	0.00	70.20
30/04/2026	Unity Trust Bank	March bank charges	7.00	0.00	7.00
03/05/2026	Wallace Arboriculture	April grounds maintenance	480.00	0.00	480.00
05/05/2026	Jan Stobart	Internal Audit	180.00	0.00	180.00
01/05/2026	Cloud Next	Annual hosting costs	50.00	10.00	60.00
12/05/2026	Roger Clark	Field and fencing works	520.00	0.00	520.00
TOTAL:			4,352.89	287.78	4,640.67

Resolved: That the accounts for payment listed above be approved for payment.

26/21/2 Bank Reconciliation to 31st March 2026

The Bank reconciliation to the 31st March 2026 was received and noted by the Council and signed by Cllr Holt.

26/22 Planning

26/22/1 To Consider Planning Applications submitted and published by Maldon District Council

26/22/1/1 - 26/00244/FUL - Demolish existing building and erect replacement building for the use of stables, machinery and hay storage. Installation of solar panels on roof and change of use from Equestrian use to personal use of the owners. Sextons Barn, Sextons Lane, Great Braxted. **No comment**

26/22/2 To Note the Parish Council's Response to Planning Applications Made Outside of a Meeting

There were no applications to note.

26/22/3 To Note Planning Decisions Made by Maldon District Council

There were no decisions to report.

26/23 Environment

26/23/1 Tree Works

Members considered quotes to complete the remedial tree works, recommended in the 2026 Tree Risk Survey.

Resolved: That the Council approved a quote, submitted by Walton's Tree Services at a cost of £1,670.

26/24 Items for Next Agenda

The following items will be added to the next Council meeting agenda:

1. The Chairman will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office
2. An update on the village sign refurbishment

26/25 Updates

Cllr Knapman confirmed that the majority of the works to clear the brambles, rotavate the area and repair the fence line had been completed. The contractor would return the following week to undertake further fence repairs and fill holes in the ground.

26/26 General Announcements

No general announcements were made.

26/27 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

26/28 Complaint Made by a Member of the Public

The Council discussed a complaint made by a hirer of the Braxted Pavilion.

Resolved: That the Hire Terms of Conditions be amended to make hirers aware the field is open to the public at all times and dogs may be off leads in this area.

26/29 Public Domain

Members agreed that the matter referred to in minute reference 26/28 would remain in private session.

26/30 Date of Next Meeting

The next council meeting will take place at 8:00pm on Tuesday 14th July 2026.

26/31 Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 9:31pm.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____