

STANFORD RIVERS PARISH COUNCIL

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Adriana Jones
Clerk to the Council

TO: ALL COUNCILLORS

You are hereby summoned to attend the Annual Meeting of the **Parish Council** which will be held on **Thursday 15th May 2025** in the **Toot Hill Village Hall**, Toot Hill at **5.30pm** to transact the business shown in the agenda below.



Adriana Jones, Clerk to the Council
 10th May 2025

AGENDA

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To **RECEIVE** questions from members of the public at **5.30pm**.

In accordance with an agreed procedure, the time allocated for public questions shall be limited to 10 minutes or such other period determined by the Chairman of the Meeting.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To **PROPOSE** and **SECOND** nominations for the Office of Chairman and, if there is more than one nominee, to vote thereon. To **EXECUTE** the declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman of the Council.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

To **PROPOSE** and **SECOND** nominations for the Office of Vice Chairman and, if there is more than one nominee, to vote thereon.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To **RECEIVE** any apologies for absence.

4. OTHER ABSENCES

To **NOTE** any absences for which no apology has been received.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To **RECEIVE** any Declarations of Interest by Members.

Any Member with a personal interest in a matter must consider whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Non Pecuniary or Other Pecuniary Interest, and declare it accordingly. A Member who is unsure as to how to declare their interest should seek independent advice.

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To **APPROVE**, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th March 2025.

7. MEMBERS REPORTS

To receive brief reports from Members and to **RECEIVE** any questions emanating from those reports:

- Chairman's Report
- Vice Chairman's Report
- District and County Councillor Reports
- Parish Councillors Reports

8. VE DAY 80 - A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION

On 8th May, members of the Parish Community joined together to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, which included light refreshments on Sharps Green, Toot Hill, poignant music and commentary, and finally the lighting of the beacon. The event was well attended, with ECC Cllr McIvor giving a short address before the community joined the nation in singing 'I vow to Thee, my Country'. Cllr Tallon assisted on the day with setting up and H&S, and Cllr Adams was also in attendance. Pictures will feature in the next edition of News and Views.

9. NOTICE BOARD, TOOT HILL

The Clerk has been liaising with EFDC with regard to the damaged Notice Board at Toot Hill, and has received feedback that EFDC has no evidence that the small notice board at Toot Hill is their responsibility to maintain or replace. The Parish Clerk has no evidence to this effect. The Notice Board is damaged, and will need replacing, albeit current not posing any H&S risk. Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** this matter.

10. CLERKS REPORT

To **RECEIVE** the oral report of the Clerk on matters which may be of current interest to Members and which require a formal update, and to **RECEIVE** such correspondence and communication as the Clerk may place before the Council, which at the time of printing the agenda includes the following:

- Have the three CCTV signs been erected at the Village Hall?
- Phone call from resident regarding water flowing down Berwick Lane, and large pothole. Water flow has been reported to ECC (ref 2975722) as ECC website suggests this is highway maintainable land, and pothole also reported (ref 2975723).
- Report of used car business being run from Garden Fields, causing problems for residents – Clerk advised applicant to report to EFDC enforcement.
- Liaising with Government with regard to redirection of domain from evoice website to .GOV
- Clerk has registered as a coordinator for Neighbourhood Watch as a backup, as requested by Cllr Adams.
- Query about farmers bird scatter bombs – directed to relevant legislation
- Further complaints about lorries using School Road
- Chelmer and Blackwater Ramblers Club using car park 21st May leading a walk around the Toot Hill Parish
- Access code for defibrillator placed on Woodman PH cabinet
- Response from Government on devolution proposals - <https://www.essex.gov.uk/about-council/plans-and-strategies/our-vision-essex/devolution-and-local-government-0>

11. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

To **RECEIVE** an update on the Stanford Rivers Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, including the official 'Ourwatch' system.

12. HGVS USING RURAL ROADS

a) School Road

Following complaints received about the number and frequency of HGVs using School Road, and as agreed at the last meeting, the Clerk contacted the only business she was aware of that was operating from the Stewarts Farm site – Carton Packaging – who confirmed that these were not their lorries, that they operate a small Transit van and Mercedes curtain sider, and that their working hours are 8.00 – 16.30 Monday - Friday. The Clerk has been investigating this further, and it seems there may be numerous companies operating from the site as follows:

- Ukpatches Ltd (Unit F), CM Freight Services Limited (Unit J), Sovereign Storage Ltd (Unit B2), Stallion Distribution Ltd (Unit B1), Great Blending Company Ltd (Unit D), Oxford Food Supplies Ltd (Unit F), Excel Premier Packaging Ltd (Unit A), Nearly There Holdings Ltd (Unit B), Eruption Radio Ltd (Unit F), Carton Packaging 2020 Ltd (Unit D).

There is also a sign at the entrance stating 'Excel Flour', and a complaint has been received about flour lorries.

At the March meeting, it was noted that residents would need to provide evidence or logs of timings, etc, when the lorries were causing issues so that this could be reported to EFDC, as the fact that lorries are using rural roads is neither a crime, nor unreasonable (depending on timing). The site has permission for B1(a) Offices, B1(c) Industrial Purposes, and B8 Storage with ancillary offices, parking and storage planning uses. This is under EPF/1591/11. There are a number of conditions on the permission in terms of timings, which include the following:

- Condition 9 – No deliveries shall be taken at or despatched from the site outside the hours or 7.30am-6.30pm hours Monday to Friday, 8am-1pm Saturday, nor at any time on Sundays, bank or public holidays, in order to protect the amenity of the area.
 - Condition 10 – No machinery shall be operated and no process shall be carried out outside the following times 7.30am-6.30pm hours Monday to Friday, 8am-1pm Saturday, nor at any time on Sundays, bank or public holidays, in order to protect the amenity of the area.
 - Condition 11 – No storage shall take place outside of the buildings within the site, in order to protect the green belt.
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Therefore, if Councillors wish for the Clerk to continue to raise this matter with EFDC Enforcement, she will need evidence of non-compliance with the stated conditions.

b) Berwick Lane

- I. It was agreed at the March meeting that the Chairman would visit Berwick Farm Industrial area to ascertain if there had been an intensification on site. The current permissions in place for Berwick Farm are as follows:
 - EPF/0065/18 - Demolition of modern barns/parts of barns and conversion of historic and modern barns to 5 dwellings, with proposed construction of cartlodges
 - EPF/2643/19 - Application for Prior Notification for a proposed steel framed agricultural barn (Revised application to EPF/2020/19)

The Chairman did visit site and advised that there is construction work going on in the main Farmyard & Farmhouse Area. These seem to be a complete mixture of residential and “being renovated” farm buildings. These areas resemble a building site. There is a new quite large agricultural shed to the north. That seems to be used in conjunction with the Berwick Farm Cross country riding course. No traffic there. Councillors are asked if they wish to progress this matter further.

- II. Signage Entrance points to Berwick Lane – due to the extremely rural nature of Berwick Lane, and that it is practically impossible for two vehicles to pass along this road, it has been suggested that further signage should be placed at the entrance points to this road advising they are not suitable for HGVs. This is particularly important when it comes to times when the A113 is closed, and chaos ensues on Berwick Lane by drivers using the rural roads as a cut through. Councillors are asked to consider this matter.

13. OPEN SPACES AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

a) **Work on land the PC does not own** – The Clerk to provide an update on this matter.

b) **Tree Risk Assessment** – To receive an update on tree works that have taken place.

14. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

To formally confirm this Council meets the eligibility criteria to hold the General Power of Competence (two thirds of its Councillors elected, and the Clerk holding the necessary qualification).

15. INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/2025

To **NOTE** the final internal audit for 2024/2025 which was completed on 18th April 2025, a copy of which is attached to the agenda.

16. ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION

To **AGREE** receipt of all meeting notifications, agendas, minutes, and all general correspondence to be received via email.

17. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS 2024/2025

To **CONSIDER** the draft accounts as attached to the agenda, and approve by way of resolution.

18. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/2025

Each year the Councils Accounts and Practices (known as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return - AGAR) are reviewed by an external auditor appointed by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. For this Council, PKF Littlejohn are this Councils appointed auditors. The following dates for the External Audit apply for this Council:

- The AGAR must be approved by 30th June 2025 and submitted to PKF Littlejohn by 1st July 2025.
- The requirement for the public inspection period (which must include the first 10 working days of July) will start 16th June and will end on 28th July 2024.

As both the income and expenditure for this Council was over £25,000, it is subject to a Basic Review as part of the limited assurance review process. The Clerk is also responsible for completing numerous documents to submit to the auditor, as well as setting requirements in terms of the notification of public rights. Council is now asked to:

- a) Review of effectiveness of the system of internal control of this Council
 - b) Prepare the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1)
 - c) Approve the Annual Governance Statement by way of **RESOLUTION**
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- d) Consider the Accounting Statements (Section 2)
- e) Approve the Accounting Statements by way of **RESOLUTION**
- f) Ensure that both the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statement is signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

The Clerk will provide the documents at the meeting for review and signature.

19. CHANGES TO PLANNING – GREEN BELT / GREY BELT

The Clerk will provide Councillors with a brief update on this matter.

20. PLANTERS FOR THE VILLAGE GATEWAY SIGNS, STANFORD RIVERS

The Clerk is awaiting a date from the contractor to install the planters.

21. VEHICULAR SPEEDING AND SAFETY MATTERS IN THE PARISH

Community Speedwatch - To receive an update on matters concerning the Community Speedwatch Programme, which may include ANPR.

22. HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

At the March meeting it was agreed to move forward with an Affordable Housing Needs survey to establish if there was a need within the Parish for Rural Affordable Housing for local people. The process would be that the RCCE complete a covering letter and survey, and send sufficient copies of these to the Parish Council for distribution (around 320). Attached to the agenda is a draft of the covering letter, and the survey. Councillors are asked to **AGREE** these documents, along with a date for the proposed Survey. The survey must run for 6 weeks, however the Clerk would like to propose that the survey starts on 1st August 2025, and runs for a period of 8 weeks given part of this time is over the summer holidays. In addition, this would align with the creation and distribution of News and Views mid July to coincide with the Toot Hill show. Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** this matter.

23. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** the following matters:

1. To CONSIDER any planning applications submitted to the Parish Council for comment as detailed below		
NIL		
2. To NOTE any planning applications that have been responded to via the Clerks delegated powers		
EPF/0393/25	Coalfields Farm, Epping Road, Colliers Hatch, Epping CM16 7PX	Construction of two extensions to agricultural building
<p>The Parish OBJECTS to this application for the following reasons.</p> <p>The site was effectively incorrectly granted permission by Permitted Development rights for two barns under EPF/1281/20 – one for a general purpose hay / straw barn, and a separate larger barn for machinery – incorrectly given as the site is within 3km of an aerodrome and the height is more than 3km. Both barns are yet to be fully constructed, with only the main structure for each being completed at this time. There are a couple of hay bales recently stored in each structure, however the site (which is described as a self contained agricultural unit) has not been used for any crop agricultural cultivation since this permission was granted. The only activity seen on the site is horse grazing.</p> <p>At the time of the original application (EPF/1281/20), the supporting statement set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is a self-contained agricultural unit. The size and height of the proposed barns are such that they can practically store crop farmed on the unit and practically accommodate suitable modern machinery and portable agricultural equipment. The access would likely be used less once the proposed barns are in place as any crop farmed on the agricultural unit would require regular agricultural machinery access to both prepare, maintain and harvest the crop. This is due to there currently being nowhere to store agricultural machinery, materials or said crop on the agricultural unit itself. <p>Thus, the suggestion at that time was that these two barns were sufficient for the needs of the agricultural unit.</p> <p>Given the barns are not complete, are not being used as per their intended purpose under EPF/1281/21, and that the site is not being used for agricultural purposes, the applicant has failed to demonstrate the agricultural need for these additions. For example, the large barn (Barn B) granted under EPF/1281/20 is</p>		

larger than the barn which is the subject of this current application, was specifically required to house agricultural machinery, however is not being used (and has not) for any machinery. Thus, where is the justification for the additional two large extensions to barn A?

Furthermore, the supporting agricultural justification report submitted with this application gives rise to confusion. Firstly it sets out that the land at Coalfields amounts to approximately 12 acres but is farmed within a wider holding operated by the applicant with the overall unit exceeding 8 hectares. It also sets out that the land at Coalfields Farm is cultivated for hay cropping. It then goes on to state that at present, equipment must be transported to and from the site daily, contributing to slow-moving and heavy traffic on the surrounding highways, and that by allowing machinery to be stored on-site, the proposal will help to reduce unnecessary journeys, thereby improving road safety and minimising disruption to local traffic. Firstly, as mentioned previously in this response, permission has already been given for a large barn (Barn B) to store machinery on site, however it is not currently being used for that purpose, plus it is unclear what the relevance is of the 'wider holding'. The suggestion is that the proposed extensions are required to provide machinery, etc, for the maintenance and cultivation of the 12 acre self contained site, however there is currently sufficient space in the two approved barns to provide all the machinery and storage to manage this self contained unit. This is further supported by the suggestion that the new development is expected to 'reduce vehicle movements, as it will provide additional secure on-site storage for machinery and equipment' – a statement that was also made as part of EPF/1281/20.

Whilst it is accepted that buildings for agriculture are permitted in the Green Belt, the Parish Council believes that the applicant has failed to adequately justify the need for these two extensions, and there cannot be an exponential growth of agricultural barns without their being evidence and justified need.

In addition, the proposed unjustified machinery store addition would require the ground level to be significantly raised given the topography of the site. This barn has already been sited on the highest point of the land, detrimentally affecting the Green Belt, and this addition would worsen this situation.

As such, this application is contrary to Local Plan policy DM4 C(i).

EPF/0844/25	Jemswood, Widows Farm, Toot Hill Road, Ongar, CM5 9QR	Variation to Condition 2 of EPF/2330/21 (Proposed demolition of existing stable building and construction of single dwelling and associated external works.) NO OBJECTION
EPF/0370/25	41, Berwick Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PY	Listed Building application for Single storey extension, roof dormer extension with internal remodelling. NO OBJECTION
EPF/0529/25	Land adjacent to Willows End, Cumley Road, Toot Hill, CM5 9SJ	Construction of new dwelling. Resubmission of refused application EPF/0486/24.

The Parish Council has noted the reduction in size and alterations to the roof configuration which has reduced the overall impact on the adjacent dwelling, Elm Cottage. However the Parish Council still has significant concerns regarding the basement proposals. It is accepted that as stated by the Inspector following the appeal for EPF/0486/24, the basement does not have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt, and it is noted that the applicant has very slightly reduced the width of the property so that there is now 2.32m between Elm Cottage and the proposed new dwelling. However this still leaves the Parish Council extremely concerned as to the ability to safely create a basement so close to both Elm Cottage and the new dwelling built at Willows End – a concern that was also alluded to in the Inspectors reports for EPF/0486/24.

The Parish Council therefore formally requests that should permission be granted, a sufficiently robust condition be attached to the permission requiring the applicant to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority PRIOR TO WORKS STARTING evidencing how such a basement would be created, showing that there would be no detrimental impact on the stability of structure of neighbouring properties.

3. To **NOTE** any planning applications upon which EFDC do not accept comments

EPF/0700/25 CLD PROP EPF/0699/25	3 Church Cottages, Church Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PS	Certificate of lawful development for a proposed outbuilding.
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CLD PROP EPF/0698/25 CLD PROP		Certificate of Lawful Development for proposed rear extensions. Certificate of Lawful Development for proposed single storey side extension.
EPF/0748/25 DRC	New House Farmhouse, Mutton Row, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9QH	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 'Frame Survey' and condition 4 'Schedule of Works and Method Statement' on planning permission EPF/0891/24 (Grade II Listed building consent for internal and external works to chimney stack, fire
EPF/0804/25 DRC	6, Garden Fields, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PL	Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (surface water disposal) & 4 (landscape) on planning permission EPF/2534/23 (External retrofit works and rear extension to the property owned by Epping Forest District Council, by upgrading the thermal performance of walls, roofs, ground floor, windows, doors, improving air tightness, improving means of controlled ventilation and reducing summertime overheating).
4. To <i>NOTE</i> any other planning matters		
SOLAR FARM - Consultation even on 30 th April regarding potential Solar Farm on land east of Tawney Common, Theydon Mount, CM16 7PU. Consultation set out that the project would have a capacity of 30MW with the proposed development creating enough renewable energy to meet the annual electricity demands of approximately 8,123 homes. It would also offset approximately 4,906 tonnes of CO2 each year, or 196,240 tonnes of CO2 over the lifetime of the project. This is the equivalent of taking around Coopersale Common Fiddlers Hamlet 1,144 cars off the road. Cllrs Sardja, Jackson and Glover attended the consultation. As yet, no formal planning application has been received. Points to consider at the time of an application include battery storage and vehicular access to the site.		
APPEALS - 3332524 - 3332525	Colemans Farm, Toot Hill Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, Essex CM5 9QN	Appeal against refusal of EPF/1211/22 - the development proposed is retention of tree house. Appeal EPF/2472/21 - the development proposed is retrospective permission for erection of 3 holiday huts. Appeals dismissed – copy of appeal notice is attached to the agenda.
5. To <i>NOTE</i> any planning decisions by EFDC		
EPF/0578/25	Maybanks Farm, Epping Road, Ongar, CM5 9SQ	Agricultural steel portal frame Hay storage Barn. Approved 10/4/25 <i>This was a PN Agricultural application, so the PC was not notified nor consulted, however the Clerk has raised a query as the site is within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome.</i>
EPF/0438/25	Oak Lodge Stud, Mill Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9SF	Application for variation of condition 2 'Plan no's' on planning permission EPF/1434/23 (Demolition of existing stables, menage, round pen and field shelters and consolidation of surrounding areas to create one new residential dwelling with prescribed dom.... Approved 24/04/2025 <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/0485/25	Millside, Toot Hill Road, Ongar, CM5 9LJ	Prior approval for proposed enlargement to dwellinghouses by construction of additional storey. Approved 30/4/25 <i>PC had no objection</i>

EPF/0311/25	Land North of Shonks Mill Bridge, Shonks Mill Road, Stapleford Tawney	Non Material Amendment to EPF/2702/22.	Approved 13/3/25 <i>PC were not consulted on this application – changes to planting</i>
EPF/2580/24	Land Opposite High Mead, Toot Hill Road, Ongar, CM5 9LJ	New Build 2-Bed self-build Bungalow to provide accessible living.	Refused 28/3/25 <i>PC Objected to this application. Refused for reasons of Green Belt, inappropriate location, urbanisation and domestication of the site, and no 106</i>

24. TOOT HILL VILLAGE HALL

- a) Solar Panels for Roof – Works to install the new roof and solar panels onto Toot Hill Village Hall have now been completed. The Clerk has provided an update to EFDC (a requirement of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) on completion. The Clerk will provide a further update to Councillors with regard to this matter at the meeting.
- b) Works to refurbish the sign at the entrance to the Village Hall has now been completed
- c) To **NOTE** the key box at the entrance to the hall failed, and has now been replaced with a larger unit.

25. TOOT HILL VILLAGE SHOW

To confirm if the Parish Council would like a presence at the show this year, and if so what format.

26. NEWS AND VIEWS

To agree that the next issue of N&V should go out Mid July to coincide with the Toot Hill Village Hall and include the Affordable Housing Needs survey. To also note there was one advertiser in the April edition.

27. FINANCIAL REPORTS

a. To Approve payments, and to note the current status of accounts:

Reference	To	For	Amount
BACS	Adriana Jones	Clerks Salary Apr and May 2025	£1,168.12
BACS	HMRC	PAYE Apr and May 2025	£291.80
BACS	HMRC	Employers NI Apr and May 2025	£93.88
BACS	Calor	Gas standing charge THVH	£20.59 (VAT £0.98)
BACS	D Wickham	THVH Cleaning and phone box tidy April 2025, and works to THVH entrance sign	£236.00
D/D	EDF	Toot Hill VH Electricity Supply March	£49.66 (£2.36 VAT)
BACS	EALC	Annual Subscription, inc to NALC	£275.91
BACS	A Jones	Expense Reim: VE day event, new lock THVH	£209.33 (VAT 4.04)
BACS	Walker Tree Care	Tree works after risk assessment at jubilee Green and THVH	£840.00 (VAT £140.00)
BACS	Gillard Building Contractors	10% final payment THVH Solar Panels Works	£4,461.80 (VAT £743.63)
BACS	Viking Direct	Stamps and Env N&V	£303.47 (VAT £7.08)
BACS	Auditing Solutions	Final internal audit 24/25	£120.00 (VAT £20.00)
BACS	Thornwood Grounds Maint	Various Grounds Maintenance works	£711.60 (VAT £118.60)

BACS	North Weald Bassett PC	Printing of N&V	£120.00
BACS	Gillard Building Contractors	Toot Hill Village Hall Roof replacement, and prep works for Solar Panels (paid)	£35,694.46 (VAT £5,949.08)
BACS	Solar Green	Solar PV System THVH (paid)	£15,831.17
BACS	A O'Neal	Return of Damage Deposit for hire 9/5	£100.00

Bank Balances as at 30th April 2025

Unity Current Account 4775	£ 3,241.56
Unity Deposit Account 4788	£ 58,840.17

INCOME:

- £ 74.00 – Forest Radio Hire THVH 13/4 BACS 10/4
- £135.75 – A O'Neil Hire THVH 9/5 BACS 11/4 (inc £100 damage dep)
- £ 88.75 – Alpaca Communications hire THVH 30/4 BACS 14/4
- £ 20.00 – Bartlett – Advert N&V April BACS 17/4
- £154.00 – Essex Silk Painters March & Apr hire THVH Chq#061
- £ 26.40 – High Country Ladies Group THVH hire Feb Chq#061
- £ 32.50 – High Country History Group THVH Hire Feb Chq#061
- £2,443.95 – HMRC VAT Return 24/25
- £23,462.00 – EFDC Precept 24/25

b. To review the bank reconciliation up to 30th April 2025 alongside the bank statements.

28. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS/EVENTS

Councillors are asked to **NOTE** the date of the next meetings:

- 17th July 2025 (note third Thursday, not second)
- 11th September 2025
- 13th November 2025

29. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

To put forward any items for the next meeting, or to keep on the agenda, including:

- London Hoist Appeal - Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/J1535/W/24/3350572 & APP/J1535/C/24/3350190 - no update
- Colemans Farm Appeal - APP/J1535/C/24/3345636 - Use of the land to provide tourist accommodation with four pods sited – no update.
- Possibility of electric charging points at the hall (Cllr Saridja)