

# Stanford Rivers PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES

**Meeting:** PARISH COUNCIL

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Time:** 5.30pm

Toot Hill Village Hall, Toot Hill Road, Toot Hill, Essex

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### PRESENT:

**Councillors (5)** Cllr Glover (Chairman), Cllr Jackson\*, Cllr Mrs Jackman, Cllr Adams\*, Cllr Hollington  
Cllr Tallon

\* attended remotely via Zoom

**Also in Attendance (1)** - Adriana Jones – Clerk

**Members of the Public (2)** – inc EFDC Cllr Brady  
**Members of the Press (1)**

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None

### P14.863 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Saridja. ECC Cllr Mclvor also offered his apologies.

### P14.864 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

### P14.865 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

### P14.866 MINUTES

Councillors **APPROVED** the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### P14.867 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Cllr Adams briefly reported on the recent high interest incident in the Parish concerning Mr Cavendish, advising that he understood somebody had been charged in connection with this. Cllr Jackson advised that he understood those charged were from South London and it was thought this was a targeted attack. Cllr Adams also urged members of the public not to plaster over Facebook when they were going away or on holiday, and thieves could use this information to target properties. Crime reports remain low, with only one report from the previous week of a transit van stolen from London Road. A member of the public advised there was a stolen land rover a couple of weeks ago, and this was confirmed by Cllr Adams.

### P14.868 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Members **RECEIVED** an oral report from the Clerk as follows:

- Councillors still receiving occasional emails purporting to be from the Chairman (Clerks email 8<sup>th</sup> Jan refers), and were reminded to check the actual email address from where the email came, not just the name itself.
- Clerk has provided River Roding information to local resident who attended the November meeting.
- Clerk emailed Cllr Mclvor details concerning the broken manhole cover outside number 15 London Road, and the blocked Gullies going down to Bridge Farm. It is understood that repairs to the manhole cover outside number 15 London Road took place on 20<sup>th</sup> December, however there are reports of further damage having already occurred. The Clerk has requested a further update from Cllr Mclvor concerning whether or not there is a plan in place for the clearing of the gullies, given there have been over 20 reports on the ECC system, all of which now state 'Repair will be undertaken with a non-specified timescale'. No update as yet
- Clerk has reported need for footway between Little End and Marden Ash to be cut back. Unfortunately this did not fall within the remit of the Highway Rangers, as the road is over 30MPH.
- The Clerk continues to liaise with Cllr Heather Brady regarding Council Housing in Garden Fields. Cllr Brady advised that she had raised an enquiry with two senior planning officers, and that this is currently an in house issue with housing. There had not been any planning application submitted to the planning department at this stage for additional council homes. It was understood that potentially these householders may have been offered money for their homes by other parties and that it was up to them to decide if they wished to sell their homes. The individual that raised the issue lived in close

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proximity to these homes, and it was reasonable that residents were concerned to see homes being boarded up. The Clerk was still waiting to hear back from EFDC.

- A copy of the December edition of ECC Highway highlights was attached to the agenda.
- Following representation at the November meeting, the Clerk liaised with UK Power Networks and it is understood works to cut back the tree along London Road which caused problems with the electricity unit was completed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Furthermore, the Clerk has been advised that the reason changes to the cabling had not yet been completed is that more substantial works involving new electricity pylons and cabling is being scheduled for later this year. The residents in question have been advised and kept in the loop.
- Transport for Essex have launched a consultation on their draft regional Transport Strategy for the East, setting out a series of priorities for better transport for everybody living, working, and learning in the region up to 2050. The draft strategy, which will guide future transport investment, has been developed through technical evidence analysis and talking with the public and partners to make sure it aligns with local ambitions and needs. This online consultation will close on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022, and a copy of the link was included within the main agenda. The strategy is very strategic in nature and does not drill down into specific villages and towns.
- ECC Library Services has launched its new 4 year plan - The draft Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 plan details how ECC intends to transform the Library service over the next four years into a modern, vibrant and sustainable service for all. A copy of the link was included within the agenda. ECC is committed to continued operation of all 74 libraries across the county.
- Clerk is still waiting to hear back from Gigaclear concerning eligibility for their 1 year free community Broadband service. The Clerk has chased, however the 'community hub' department does not have a number, and you have to email. The Clerk will continue to chase as it was a free service for the Village Hall for a period of 1 year, the only agreement being they can rent the hall out FOC 4 times per year for community benefit events (digital skills, cinema nights, etc). Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested that this could also include a session on using computers, especially for the elderly.
- Email received from the Councils insurance company concerning the need to ensure the Councils property valuations are up to date (to be done every 5 years). The Clerk has therefore contacted a surveyor asking for a cost / quote to provide an updated valuation to fulfil this requirement.
- ECC has published its Bus Service Improvement Plan as part of its 'Bus Back Better' strategy covering the period 2021-2026, within which there is a recognition that rural services are a challenge. Full details of the link were included in the agenda. The plan included changing for a Demand Responsive Transport system (DRT) to a Digital Demand Response Transport system, which means booking the bus via an app on your phone. Again this was a relatively strategic plan in nature. Cllr Jackson suggested this Council should respond asking again for the extension of the 375 service between Passingford Bridge and Ongar, thus providing an additional link that could service the Parish. Cllr Jackson stated he could not recall why it had never been implemented, however thought it was possibly to do with not having a suitable turning circle at the Four Wantz or possibly finance issues between London Transport and ECC. It was agreed the Clerk would respond to this consultation, and also to do some type of survey in News and Views to establish how much demand there is for additional bus services in the Parish, and if so which services residents would like to see and when. The Chairman stated that if we could find out what the budgetary situation is, as he recalled some years back it was determined it would be cheaper to provide a taxi for people to use occasionally rather than putting on a bus service. Cllr Hollington advised that he had seen a community bus service running through the Parish, stating that he would make a note of this service when he sees it.

### **P14.869 SPEEDERBOT**

It was noted that as agreed at the November meeting, the Clerk had contacted Councillors in the Wards of both Ecclesall (Sheffield) and Finchampsted (Berkshire) regarding their involvement in the Speederbot programme in their area, with one response being received from a Ward Councillor at Ecclesall, full details of which were read out at the meeting, but essentially she had no involvement in the project and that it wasn't formally used by the Council.

In addition, the Clerk has been liaising with ECC regarding the legality of placing Speederbot signage along the highway through Little End, and the response from the new LHP Administrator is '*that there does not appear to be any regulated enforcement with Speederbot systems and albeit they track speed using GPS this is not an enforceable measure used by the Police in the same way they enforce speeding. Erecting signage which is not compliant with TSRGD (The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 )will not be permitted by Essex County Council. By all means signage can be placed on private property letting drivers know that speed is being monitored in this way, but it cannot be placed on the highway. Nor would it want to create signage clutter and cause any obstruction.*'

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Cllr Adams asked that a poster was put up on the screen for Councillors to view. Cllr Adams reminded Councillors that it was agreed at the last meeting that both himself and Cllr Jackson would have a follow up meeting with Nick who had attended the previous meeting, which has taken place. Nick is very knowledgeable about how these data systems and speederbot environment operates, and that since the meeting Cllr Adams has been into Integromat and very easily established a free account. The Integromat system can be linked to different applications in terms of compiling and analysing data, very similar to Amazon web services. The system is very useable and broad brush in terms of the data that you can obtain from a free account, and at the meeting with Nick it was felt that some additional information / data would be very useful, but to obtain this you would need to have a paid account, the cost of which was around £110/yr. This is not on a contract and can be turned off at any time. The next level up is a standard account and costs an extra £15/month. The data from the Speederbot is half hourly snapshots, but if you wanted to get it down to every 5 minutes you would need the extra data.

Cllr Adams confirmed he had looked at signage, essentially saying 'Speederbot in Operation', 600mm by 450mm, and that he had looked at costs for a light reflective highway standard sign which would be around £200, but that he felt this could be obtained cheaper. Cllr Adams stated that he felt there would be residents along the A113 who would be willing to erect a sign on their land, and that this would have a huge impact on slowing people down.

Cllr Adams advised that both himself and Cllr Jackson **PROPOSED** that the Parish Council trials this for a year, with a suggested budget of £450 for 2022/2023. The Chairman confirmed he would **SECOND** this proposal.

The Clerk advised Councillors that there was no longer a requirement for the Speedgun to be calibrated as advised by the Essex Community Speedwatch Team, and that there was an Earmarked reserve of £422 for this Calibration, and that this could be reallocated to obtain speed data and signage as per Cllr Adams and Cllr Jacksons proposal. The Clerk advised that the Council needed to be careful about the relationship between the Speederbot campaign (over which the Council has no control) and the work being conducted by the Parish Council, and these were two separate matters, albeit to achieve the same goal. Cllr Mrs Jackman advised she was absolutely against this and certainly against paying out Council funds for it, stating that the Police are already aware of speeding issues along the A113, and that the Speederbot programme already gets the data, asking what additional information would be obtained by the Parish Council getting the data. Cllr Hollington asked once the Parish Council has this information, what result would come of it, to which Cllr Jackson stated that he had spoken to both the Police and Essex Community Speedwatch team, with the latter stating they are quite keen to see where this leads and are supportive of it, with the Police asking Cllr Jackson to provide any information to them that he feels is relevant or may be helpful to them, specifically what time of day most offenders are exceeding the speed limit. By spending Council money on this would help identify the times of day when the most prolific offending occurs for the police to take action and the Speedwatch team to focus their efforts. Without the data it is very hit and miss as to what time to go out. Cllr Hollington suggested that it made sense for Essex Police to do this for the whole of their area, and that this would be much more cost effective in the long run. Cllr Tallon stated that he would support this as a deterrent for speeding along the A113.

After some further discussion, the Chairman asked that a vote was taken on the Proposal, the results of which are as follows:

- 4 - For
- 2 - Against
- 0 - Abstain

It was therefore **AGREED** that the sum of £450 to be earmarked for 2022/2023 to obtain speeding data via the Integromat system, as well as the purchase of signage to be used on private land to deter speeding along the A113, and that the earmarked Reserve of £422 for the Calibration of the Speedgun be reallocated to this project (not in addition to the £450 agreed). Cllr Jackson advised that he and Cllr Adams would provide more information at the March meeting regarding signage.

## **P14.870 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Councillors **CONSIDERED and NOTED** the following matters:

1. To <b>CONSIDER</b> any planning applications submitted to the Parish Council for comment as detailed below		
NIL		
2. To <b>NOTE</b> any planning applications that have been responded to via the Clerks delegated powers		
EPF/3119/21	Land to south side of Steers Farm, School Road, Toot Hill, Ongar CM5 9SF	Proposed new infill detached 5 bedroom house with detached carport. Alterations to approved scheme: EPF/1889/19

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**The Parish Council considered this application in great detail, and whilst there was some concern regarding alterations to the width of the upper windows at both the front and rear of the property, the Council felt that proposed changes would not cause any additional detriment or loss of amenity to neighbouring residents when considered against the current approval. As such, the Parish Council has NO OBJECTION to this application.**

A member of the public was in attendance at the meeting, stating that he wished to object to the proposal, setting out a number of reasons why this application should not be approved. Councillors listened to the points raised by the resident, and re looked at the planning application on screen during the meeting. The resident was advised that the Parish Council was a statutory consultee on planning matters, and as such only passed comment and did not decide on the application itself, suggesting in the strongest terms that the resident contact the decision makers (EFDC) to advise them of his concerns and objections. After listening to the points raised by the resident, the Council agreed they would like to submit further comments to the LPA as follows:

**It has been brought to the Parish Councils attention by the neighbour to the dwelling being proposed in EPF/3119/21 there may be issues affecting living conditions, respect and privacy, as well overlooking at the rear. The Parish Council considered this application, and submitted their formal response dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 2022 with a no objection. However, we kindly ask that the Planning Officer considers the following additional comments. If you look at the designs submitted it seems clear the side windows are frosted for privacy, however there are concerns that there is then a glass balcony and balustrading at the rear (and extending to the side) together with a set back side window with non-frosted glass. Therefore, anybody using this balcony can clearly overlook out and see immediately into the neighboring property (which we understand is a shower room at this side) and into the private garden and BBQ area. Effectively, this is a side view, and renders the frosted glass on the side elevation pointless. We understand that the balcony already has permission (EPF/1889/19) and as such cannot be removed, however we ask that perhaps it could be revisited to ensure the glass is frosted, and possibly higher at the side. In addition, it would only be correct that the set back side window is frosted for respect and privacy. It has also been suggested that the new boundary wall should be of substantial quality/ height for noise reduction and additional landscaping of mature trees being placed all along the boundary wall- to act as an additional privacy for both parties to create a natural wall of trees foliage as soon as possible. We sincerely hope you are able to consider these additional comments for the benefit of both the current residents and the residents of the new property.**

EPF/2558/21	60 Epping Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9SQ	Proposed new dwelling. NOTED EFDC Decision that this is refused
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**The Parish Council OBJECTS to this application. The Council wishes to challenge the assertion by the applicant that this land is classed as 'infill'. The land in question is garden land being linked to the host dwelling, namely number 60 Epping Road. Garden Land is specifically excluded from the definition of previously development land within the NPPF. Whilst there is no definition of 'infill', it implies a space between two objects. There is a significant distance between 60 Epping Road and Does Farm of around 80 meters, therefore the placing a house between these two properties cannot be regarded as infill. As such, and in light of the fact that no special circumstances have been provided to justify the proposed new dwelling, the Parish Council wishes to object on the basis of overdevelopment in the Green Belt. Whilst viewing each individual application on its own merits, the Parish Council intends to apply a consistent approach to such application (Similar application EPF/1576/21 which was refused by EFDC) refers.**

EPF/2330/21	Jemswood Widows Farm Toot Hill Road Ongar CM5 9QR	Proposed demolition of existing stable building and construction of single dwelling and associated external works.
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**The Parish Council OBJECTS to this application. The site currently comprises stabling and a menage, both of which are deemed an exception in terms of building within Green Belt. Stables and their associated use is frequently seen in rural areas, and goes some way to help define what it means to live in the countryside. Over the past few years the Parish Council has seen a significant increase in applications using the fact that stables are 'present' on a site as justification to build a house in its place, stating this will 'increase the openness of the Green Belt'. This Parish Council strongly disagrees. The continued urbanisation of the Countryside is decimating its rural character, and no exceptional circumstances have been presented to justify this application. Furthermore, it is stated within the supporting paperwork that the menage is to be retained, which implies a need for stabling. The proposed floor print of the building is greater than the stables already in situ, and coupled with the apex roof represents overdevelopment the Green**

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<b>Belt. Whilst viewing each individual application on its own merits, the Parish Council intends to apply a consistent approach to such application (Similar applications - EPF/1967/21 which was refused by EFDC - and EPF/2140/21 which the Parish Council objected to) refer.</b>		
EPF/2410/21	Willows End Cumley Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9SJ	Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement chalet-style property with a basement (Alterations to approved scheme: EPF/0941/21). NOTED EFDCs Decision that this is refused.
<p><b>The Parish Council wishes to raise an OBJECTION to this application.</b>  <b>The Parish Council is not opposed to the demolition of the current dwelling, and the creation of a replacement dwelling, and had no objection to the previous application (EPF/0941/21), however the Parish council has concerns over the alterations proposed in this new application, very specifically the front elevation. The alteration to create what is effectively now a 'glazed wall' – floor to ceiling – in the front elevation is entirely out of keeping with the street scene, and raises issues in terms of loss of amenity, privacy, and overlooking with the dwelling opposite. Whilst it is accepted the road has no uniform style or house type, the proposal has changed the front elevation from what was effectively a chalet style property to an over imposing, out of character property, that can no longer be classified as chalet in style. No concerns were raised regarding the rear or side elevation, nor the extension of the basement, however the Parish Council is unable to support the changes proposed to the front elevation, and objects for this reason.</b></p>		
EPF/2815/21	Colemans Farm Toot Hill Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9QN	Application for Variation of Condition 2 of EPF/3460/17 - 'Plan numbers'. (Demolition of agricultural buildings, construction of two detached houses, extension to dairy cottage garden, provision of boundary treatment and hard and soft landscaping). NOTED EFDCs Decision that this is refused.
<p><b>The Parish Council wishes to raise the point that no existing or proposed site plans were included with this application (or at least were not available on the EFDC Planning pages) which has made it extremely difficult to assess the application fully. It is understood to be a requirement of the EFDC validation process that these plans are submitted. As such, the Parish Council is having to assume the exact location of where this barn is to be located. In principle the Parish Council has NO OBJECTION to the proposed amendments, however asks that the Planning Officer considering this case is clear of the exact location of the barn, and assesses whether or not it would raise any issue concerning overlooking or loss of privacy with the adjacent or nearby dwellings.</b></p>		
<b>3. To NOTE any planning applications upon which EFDC do not normally accept comments</b>		
EPF/3030/21 CLD	Lilac House 6 London Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9PH	Certificate of lawful development for a proposed outbuilding NOTED EFDCs Decision that this is Granted
<b>4. To NOTE any enforcement actions or appeals.</b>		
NIL		
<b>5. To NOTE any other planning matters – including Planning Decisions</b>		

## EPF/1826/20

Land At The Rear Of The White Bear P.H. 149 London Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9QF  
Proposed bungalow - PERMISSION GRANTED 20/12/2021  
The Parish Council OBJECTED to this application.

## EPF/2410/21

Willows End Cumley Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9SJ  
Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement chalet-style property with a basement. (Alterations to approved scheme: EPF/0941/21) - PERMISSION REFUSED 16/12/2021  
The Parish Council OBJECTED to this application

## EPF/2558/21

60 Epping Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9SQ  
Proposed new dwelling - PERMISSION REFUSED 16/12/2021  
The Parish Council OBJECTED to this application

## EPF/2815/21

Colemans Farm Toot Hill Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9QN  
Application for Variation of Condition 2 of EPF/3460/17 - 'Plan numbers'. (Demolition of agricultural buildings, construction of two detached houses, extension to dairy cottage garden, provision of boundary treatment and

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hard and soft landscaping) - PERMISSION REFUSED

The Parish Council raised a query on this application with regard to the lack of plans being submitted for review.

## EPF/3350/17

Land Between Doe's Farm and 60 Epping Road Epping Road Stanford Rivers Ongar Essex CM5 9SQ

Erection of two detached dwellings, associated garages and landscaping - PERMISSION REFUSED

The Parish Council had NO OBJECTION to this application

## EPF/2622/21 & EPF/2623/21 LB

Stanford River House 135 London Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9PP

Single storey glass link building, internal works to create vaulted roof section with rooflight. Demolition of workshop and existing garage and erection of new garage, new boundary treatment and roof and fenestration changes. (Revised application to EPF/1526/21). - PERMISSION GRANTED

The Parish Council had NO OBJECTION to this application.

## EPF/2668/21

5 Church Cottages Church Road Stanford Rivers Ongar CM5 9PS

Proposed single storey rear extension. PERMISSION GRANTED

The Parish Council had NO OBJECTION to this application

Cllr Heather Brady raised a concern regarding a couple of issues for which she wanted the opinions of the Parish Council as this was causing concern with the neighbouring parish. Cllr Brady advised that there seems to be enormous barns planned to be erected along the Epping Road on the border of Stanford Rivers and Stapleford Tawney for which there seems to be some form of planning permission in place – the first two fields on the left hand side as you go towards Epping. It was known who the land belongs to, and that if the permission for these barns was granted by way of permitted development rights you have to prove that you are a farmer and that this land owner does not fulfil this criteria. Cllr Brady had been contacted by a resident who has expressed concern at the amount of huge lorries going along the highway as it was thought the concrete foundation was being started, and that these lorries are breaking the road up. A resident in the public gallery advised that these lorries were for the lagoon on the neighbouring fields and not to do with the two agricultural barns. Cllr Brady advised that she had spoken to a planning officer and had asked on what basis permission had been granted, and had advised that the basis on which permission had been granted was for the storage of hay. Cllr Brady stated that nobody is disputing the fact that the owner does make his whole career on horses and is brilliant at what he does, but this should not give you permission to have two separate barns on two separate fields to store gigantic amounts of hay. Cllr Hollington said you cannot build a barn to bring in produce from other sites, but you can build a barn for crops grown on your own fields. Cllr Brady said these barns are springing up everywhere, and that she wanted to check the Parish Council was aware of these two. The Clerk asked if the concern was that the applicant didn't fulfil the permitted development rights requirement of being a farmer, to which Cllr Brady confirmed this to be the case. Cllr Brady suggested that the Parish Council should ask EFDC if they have properly gone through the application to check the requirements have been met.

With regard to the slurry lagoon, the cost of fertiliser has gone up substantially and it was thought that perhaps this is why there was now a lagoon. It was thought this was dug about two years ago, but has only just started to fill it. The Clerk advised that she thought planning permission would be needed for this, and that there were approximately two lorries every hour going to this lagoon. The road outside these building are getting quite bad.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would look into whether or not planning permission was needed for the lagoon, and that the Clerk should also look into the issue of the two barns, and that herself and Cllr Hollington would liaise on this matter. Cllr Brady advised that this was not a personal issue, and that the land owner was a very nice man, however it is about protecting the beauty of the countryside.

## **P14.871 HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS**

### a) Local Highway Panel Request

Councillors **NOTED** that the next meeting is scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022, and that the Clerk has asked Cllr Mclvor to obtain an update on the schemes below. In addition, it was noted that Sarah Alcock is no longer the contact for the LHP, and instead an interim officer – Param Kaur-Kingston has been appointed.

- LEPP192054 – A113 London Road, Stanford Rivers Signage scheme – Approved for funding 2021/2022 – Agreed by the LHP to be a priority for the 2021/2022 budget, and estimated completion for Q4.

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- LEPP202031 - A113 Romford Road, Great Colemans, Stanford Rivers, Request for measures to protect Grade 2 listed building from large vehicles clipping the property's guttering and wall. Such as signage (slow / narrow section) and metal barriers around the base of the building to stop lorries from being able to get close enough to collide with the gutter, at Validation Stage, awaiting Highway Boundary information. NOTE: This was not submitted by the Parish Council.
- LEPP202048 - A113 Romford Road jw Little bury Mill, Stanford Rivers – Request for Traffic calming measures at the junction, at Validation Stage, awaiting speed and volume information. NOTE: This was not submitted by the Parish Council.
- LEPP202047 – A113 London Road, Stapleford Tawney, request for traffic calming measures and signage, at Validation Stage, awaiting speed and volume information. NOTE: This was submitted by the Parish Council, but is not within the Parish.
- NEW REQUEST: A113 Layby near Traceys Farm – request for hedging to be removed and replaced with reflective barriers. The Clerk has also emailed EFDC Fly Tipping team asking them to get involved. Louise has passed this on to Senior Waste Development Officer, Julia Walters, in case this is something she may have an input. Cllr Mclvor has also been copied in.
- NEW REQUEST: A new formal LHP request has been sent for the reinstatement of signage outside Piggotts for directional signage towards Toot Hill. This was supported by ECC Cllr Mclvor.

### b) **VAS (Vehicle Activated Signs)**

At the November meeting, it was agreed this matter would be considered further, and Councillors recalled that it was now possible for Parish Councils to fund the supply of different VAS or SID. Attached to the agenda was information regarding the process, which ultimately involves applying for a licence from ECC to install such a sign(s). The Clerk suggested a small working group should be set up to consider possible locations. Cllr Jackson stated that the two VAS on the A113 seem to work reasonably well, and asked if the point of this was to look for possible locations for other signs elsewhere in Parish. The Clerk advised that this was possible, but that also we may wish to think about changing the types of VAS on the A113. Cllr Jackson said he would be happy to be part of a working group but suggested somebody should also be on it from Toot Hill, to which Cllr Hollington confirmed he would be happy to be part of it. It was **AGREED** the group would meet over Zoom over the next few weeks.

c) **Fly tipping** – There have been at least an additional three instances of fly tipping in the layby near to Traceys Farm, each of which have been reported to EFDC by the Council (the latest one being Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2022). The Clerk has liaised with EFDC and it has been confirmed that a current investigation is underway following one of these instances, and involves a property in the District of St Albans. The Clerk will be informed if there is a successful prosecution. Cllr Jackson stated he was pleased that positive action was being taken by EFDC to find the culprits and that he would like continued feedback on this, especially if there was a conviction as conviction rates were very low. This should also be publicised.

d) **Traceys Farm Flooding A113** – Following confirmation that works to clear the ditches and culverts has now taken place, Trevor Baker (EFDC) has visited site and taken photo's of the works, providing an assessment from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021 that the de-silting has should be enough, on one stretch at least, to expose to the inverts the numerous gully outlets, and that although not perfect it is hopefully enough to prevent the magnitude of flooding that was occurring. Trevor has also suggested to ECC that Flowline return to jet the outlets as there's no way they could have adequately cleared them previously as they were 500mm below the invert level of the ditch. It was this issue that was causing the water to hold on the carriageway for so long after an event. We now await a prolonged rainfall to assess the overall effectiveness of the works, but Trevor feels it's a big step in the right direction.

### **P14.872 STANFORD RIVERS (LITTLE END) CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING EVENT**

The Christmas Tree lighting event took place on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December, and was extremely successful with around 30 adults and children present. Santa visited and Christmas Carols were sung, and the event was enjoyed by all present. Councillors noted the following:

1. Many of those who attended felt that the 4pm start time was much better than 5pm, and suggested this should be the time set going forward. This was **AGREED** by Councillors.
2. There were issues in terms of the supply of the Christmas tree. The Clerk ordered a 12ft tree, however when this arrived it was less than 8ft high. This was returned to the supplier, who advised that he could

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not supply a 12ft tree. As such, there was a mad rush to try and source a larger tree. Eventually one was sourced, and although it was a beautiful tree, it was still too small. The cost of the tree was £204. The Clerk has liaised with EFDC regarding funding for Christmas trees and lights, and the total cost of this Christmas tree and the new lights will be provided by way of a grant from EFDC, the total amount being £270.41. Going forward, the Chairman advised he was happy to source the supply of the Christmas Tree. Cllr Jackson suggested the Council should revisit the possibility of planting a permanent tree at this location, to which the Clerk advised this had been discussed previously with concerns raised over maintenance as such trees grow very quickly. Cllr Jackson suggested this should be looked again and that if the tree was maintained regularly it wouldn't get out of hand. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would look into slow growing trees and place on a future agenda to consider.

3. As has been agreed since the Clerk has been in post, a contribution towards the cost of Santas attendance has been included under agenda item 18 (this was agreed within the Budget).
4. Thanks should go to both the Chairman, and Cllrs Jackson and Saridja for the distribution of leaflets and erection of posters.

### **P14.873 GRANT FUNDING FROM CLLR MCIVOR**

Councillors recalled that Cllr Mclvor had indicated he felt the supply of a Defibrillator within Little End would be a reasonable use of the grant funding being made available, subject to the future maintenance of said defibrillator being agreed, and that Councillors had made a number of suggestions as to the location of such a Defibrillator at the November Council meeting. The Clerk has investigated this matter and is currently looking into the possibility of a ground fixed, solar powered Defibrillator Cabinet that could be located on the Highway Land outside what used to be Piggots. The Clerk is currently liaising with ECC Land Management team to establish if this is possibility. The cost of said defibrillator cabinet would be £2,075 excluding VAT, plus there would be installation costs and the cost of the Defibrillator itself. The Grant Funding available via ECC is thought to be around £1,000. The Clerk will also try and source funding to support this project. An example of the type of Defibrillator cabinet was provided within the agenda.

Cllr Adams advised that the original house he had in mind that would be suitable to affix a defibrillator to had now erected a barrier, and that this was no longer an option. He had spent an hour talking to a local resident about the possibility of affixing a defibrillator, however this resident kept suggesting the Piggots was a more suitable location. Cllr Jackson suggested that Piggots may have their own defibrillator already, however the Clerk advised that it needed to be publicly accessible and if it's housed in an office then this wouldn't be any good for residents. The Clerk advised that if the Council didn't go for solar panels, then the Defibrillator would need to have its own electricity supply. Cllr Jackson suggested the Council should write to Piggots in the first instance and ask if they would be interested in allowing this to be placed on their property. It was therefore **AGREED** that before any further action the Clerk would write to Piggots. Cllr Hollington expressed concern about the theft of any solar panels.

### **P14.874 BUDGET / PRECEPT 2022/2023**

Attached to the agenda was copies of the proposed budget and precept figures for 2022/2023. Councillors noted that for this year the Parish Council element of the Precept for a band D property was £57.87 (£1.11 a week). The calculation to get to this is the amount the Council request in precept divided by the tax base (no. of houses EFDC are expecting to collect council tax from), which for last year was as follows: £20,977 / 362.50 = £57.87. The tax base for 2022/2023 has increased to 364.40. If the Parish Council wishes to show a NIL increase in the parish council element of Council tax for next year, the maximum amount the Council can demand of EFDC in terms of precept would be £21,087 (£21,087 / 364.40 = £57.87).

Council reviewed the additional supporting paperwork alongside the proposed figures as follows:

1. Income for 2021/2022 is expected to be significantly higher than budgeted for, due to the receipt of funds from the Toot Hill Village Hall Transfer, and income from the hall.
2. Expenditure for 2021/2022 is expected to be slightly under budget.
3. Toot Hill Village Hall - Councillors recalled from the 21/22 budget and precept meeting that the Council was in a difficult position in terms of estimating the Income and Expenditure pertaining to the Toot Hill Village Hall - not only because it was the first year the Council had managed the hall, but because of the unknown impact of COVID on bookings. The Budget was set for £6,710 expenditure and £770 income. On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021, an amount of £12,740.43 was received from the Toot Hill Village Hall Management Committee following the closure of the Charity and the transfer of funds to the Parish Council. This included a £10,000 grant received from EFDC to counter the affect of COVID on the hall income. It was **AGREED** to move this full amount (£12,740.43) into the THVH Earmarked Reserve to



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be used specifically for the hall (as agreed as part of the transfer with the Charity Commission), and in order to offset any deficit in receipts as a result of COVID whilst the Council continues to understand the cost of running the hall. For 2022/2023, the Clerk was able to provide a more informed estimate of Income and Expenditure as follows:

**Income: £2,552**  
**Expenditure: £5,158**

Councillors **AGREED** the proposed budget figures as put forward. It was also **AGREED** the hall hire fees would be considered at the March meeting given the expected deficit.

4. General Reserves – Councillors noted that the Parish Council holds a large amount of General Reserves. It is estimated that on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 the General Reserves will be £48,493 with a further £9,856 in Earmarked Reserves. Should the Toot Hill Village Hall £12,740 (point 4 above) be moved into an Earmarked Reserve, this will change to £35,753 General Reserves and £22,596 in Earmarked Reserves. The Governance and Accountability – a Practitioner Guide -recommends the following regarding Parish Council reserves:
  - *As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities have sufficient Reserves (General and Earmarked) to finance both its day to day operations and future plans. It is important, however, given that its funds are generated from taxation/public levies, that such reserves are not excessive.*
  - *General Reserve - The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months Net Revenue Expenditure. The reason for the wide range (3 to 12 months) is to cater for the large variation in sizes of individual authorities. The smaller the authority the closer the figure should be to 12 months N R E. Changes in activity levels/range of services provided will inevitably lead to changes in the requisite minimum level of General Reserve in order to provide working capital for those activities.*
  - *Earmarked and Other Reserves - None of the above in any way affects the level of Earmarked and/or Capital Receipts Reserves (EMR/CRRs) that a authority may or should hold. There is, in practice, no upper or lower limit to EMR/CRRs save only that they must be held for genuine and intended purposes, and their level should be subject to regular review and justification (at least annually), and should be separately identified and enumerated. Significant levels of EMRs in particular may give rise to enquiries from Internal and/or External Auditors*

Councillors **NOTED** the level of both General Reserves and Earmarked Reserves held by this Council and took this into account when considering if there should be an increase in the Precept for 2022/2023. The Final Internal Audit for 2021/2022 will pay particular attention to this.

5. Grounds Maintenance and Open Spaces Budget headings have been combined for 2022/2023 – the Open Spaces Budget heading consisted of cutting of White Bear Path twice per year. The current contractors cost would be increasing by 10% due to increases in petrol and material costs. It was **AGREED** to continue with the current contractor for a further period of 12 months.
6. The Chairman had proposed an increase in the Clerk's Salary to £8,320 per annum. This proposed figure has been included in the proposed budget, however discussion took place to establish if Councillors agree with the proposal, or if an alternative is suggested. It was noted that the Clerk has been employed since 2014, and had not received a pay rise since this time. Councillors **AGREED** to this, and it was also agreed to review this on an annual basis.
7. The Clerk had provisionally included the sum of £3,500 towards the cost of installing and maintaining a defibrillator in Stanford Rivers, taking into account an expected grant of £1000 from Cllr Mclvor.
8. Cllr Jackson had received guidance from the Community Speedwatch Team that the Speed Gun no longer needs to be calibrated once every two years. It was agreed earlier in the agenda to transfer this EMR to the A113 Speed Data Project.
9. Councillors were asked to consider any costs associated with the planned Queens Jubilee event in June 2022. At this stage, no costs have been included in the budget, however councillors were reminded that £400 was precepted for in 2020/2021 (and placed into an EMR) for the VE Day celebrations, and this was changed in 2021/2022 to a 'celebratory end of COVID 'event, however was **AGREED** this should be used for the community Jubilee Celebrations.

Councillors **CONSIDERED** the budget, and subsequently the precept, for 2022/2023, and Cllr Mrs Jackman **PROPOSED** that the precept for 2022/2023 should remain at £57.87 per property – a NIL increase - meaning

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the precept demand would be £21,087. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Glover. A vote was taken, the result of which were unanimous. The final precept figures were **AGREED** as follows:

## **INCOME**

	<u>2022/2023</u>
Precept	21,087
Bank Interest	10
Other Income	1,000
Toot Hill Village Hall	2,552
News and Views	0
Total	<b>24,649</b>

## **EXPENDITURE**

	<u>2022/2023</u>
Clerks Salary	8320
Subscriptions	450
Insurance	830
Audit Fee	400
Postage/Stationery/photocopying	50
Car Mileage	50
Miscellaneous / Contingency	500
Toot Hill Village Hall	5158
Christmas Tree Event SR	600
Grounds Maintenance	4400
Training	100
News & Views Post and Distribution	750
PWLB Payments	2884
Toot Hill Village Fete	100
Bank Fee	72
Additional items	3500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28164</b>

## **P14.875 REPORTS**

Members **RECEIVED** the following reports:

- Chairman's Report – The Chairman briefly reported on the idea of this Council pursuing some affordable housing in the Parish. Such a project would be significant, and could be something the Parish Council looked at doing in the future, leaving its own legacy. It was thought there were areas on the edges of fields in the Parish that if purchased for a reasonable price could provide housing for people from the local area. The purpose of affordable housing in perpetuity was to allow people from the local area to purchase a home at a reduced cost, and when they move on it is sold to somebody else from the local area also for a reduced cost. Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested liaising with Hastoe who may be able to help in this regard. Cllr Hollington asked how the restriction was managed, suggesting it was probably by way of a restrictive covenant. The Clerk suggested that it may be beneficial if perhaps at some point within the next 12 months a representative from RCCE should be invited to explain to the Council how Rural Affordable Housing worked. This was **AGREED**.
- Vice Chairman's Report – No report
- District and County Councillor Reports – Cllr McIvor had contact the Clerk to ask if Councillors were aware of any community groups with a specific item that they need which could be purchased with his locality grant, and Councillors were asked to email Clerk with any ideas. The Chairman suggested that potholes in the Parish needed attending too, and that the money should be spent on rectifying these. The Chairman asked that all Councillors should endeavour to take photos of potholes and get them reported. Cllr Brady advised that EFDC Councillors had indicated they would be happy for this matter to be moved back to being dealt with in house.

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- Parish Councillors Reports - Cllr Adams advised that the Ongar town festival would be taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022 and asked for formal permission to erect a notice on Jubilee Green advising people of this event. This was **AGREED**.

## P14.876 QUEENS JUBILEE 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2022

Councillors recalled that it was agreed to hold an event to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee taking place between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Beacons across the Country are being lit at 9.15pm GMT on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022, in celebration of the Queens 70 years on the throne. The lighting of the beacons that night will be the first community event of the Jubilee, and it is likely this will be the last chain of beacons lit during The Queen's reign, so the palace want to ensure it is the most successful one to date. The Chairman has confirmed that he still has the Beacon which was lit from the last celebratory event and will arrange for any necessary repair works to be completed. The Clerk confirmed that a discussion needed to take place to establish how the beacon was erected, lit, and secured. In addition, the Clerk stated that in order for such an event to be a success, support was needed both before and on the day from Councillors as the Clerk could not manage this on her own. It was suggested the Beacon should be erected by a JCB and Telehandler in May. The Clerk suggested there should be some tables and chairs on the triangle with drinks and cakes etc. It was **AGREED** to place this in News and Views asking if anybody wanted to help take part with the event.

## P14.877 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT 2021/2022

It was **NOTED** that the Interim Internal Audit was completed on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021. A copy of the report was attached to the agenda. The final audit is expected to take place in April/May 2022. Councillors **NOTED** the action report from this Audit.

## P14.878 TOOT HILL VILLAGE HALL

Councillors **NOTED** the following update:

- Cllr Tallon has advised that his contact has been unable to complete works to replace / repair the light at the front of the hall. The Clerk is liaising with another electrician to establish if they can complete this work, along with placing a timer on the light by the Kitchen exit.
- A Fire Safety Risk Assessment was conducted by Essex Fire Safety on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021, including the replacement and servicing of any necessary fire extinguishers. A copy of the report has now been received. Councillors will recall that a working group was set up (Cllr Hollington, Cllr Tallon) and it is suggested that the working group convenes along with the Clerk to consider the findings of the report and recommend any agreed actions for ratification by the Council.
- A date for the garage clearance has not yet been set, however it is expected this will take place in March / April when the weather is starting to get warmer
- Following a hall booking on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, the Clerk was notified that the sink in the kitchen was completely blocked. The Hall Cleaner has now cleared this, which including having to dismantle the pipework under the sink.
- The Clerk continues to liaise with the regular hall hirers and Cleaner regarding changes in Government guidelines concerning the use of public community facilities concerning COVID.
- The hall is required to purchase a music licence from PPL/PRS on an annual basis, which provides royalties regarding any recorded music that is played at the hall. PPL/PRS have provided the Clerk with an invoice, which the Clerk has challenged being as no recorded music was played as a result of the closure due to COVID. The Clerk has subsequently submitted a formal review document and requested a review of the account takes place.

## P14.879 NEWS AND VIEWS

The next edition would be published the following week.

## P14.880 FINANCIAL REPORTS

The following payments were **AGREED**.

Reference	To	For	Amount
BACS	Adriana Jones	Clerks Salary December 2021 and January 2022	<b>£720.00</b> (paid monthly £360)
BACS	HMRC	PAYE December 2021 and January 2022	<b>£180</b> (paid monthly £90)
BACS	Essex Fire Safety	Fire Risk Assessment, log book,	<b>£370.20</b>

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		plans, annual service fire extinguishers, and ongoing support THVH	(£61.70 VAT)
BACS	David Wickham	Clean Toot Hill VH Nov and Dec, Phone box tidy and COVID cleans	<b>£308.00</b> (£0 VAT)
BACS	Ongar Round Table	Contributions towards santa and sleigh 5 <sup>th</sup> December community xmas event	<b>£75.00</b> (£0 VAT)
BACS	We Are Creative	Annual hosting for website	<b>£120.00</b> (£20.00 VAT)
BACS	Auditing Solutions	Interim Internal Audit 21/22	<b>£120.00</b> (£20.00 VAT)
BACS	Adriana Jones	Reimb cost of annual subscription to Office365	<b>£59.99</b>
BACS	Adriana Jones	Reimbursement of refreshments for 5 <sup>th</sup> December Christmas Lighting event Stanford Rivers	<b>£61.44</b> (£0 VAT)
D/D	Eon	Electricity supply Toot Hill Village Hall x 2 months	<b>£70.34</b> (£3.35 VAT)
BACS	Hellabys Ltd	Works to repair Boiler THVH	<b>£108.00</b> (£18.00 VAT)
BACS	Unity Bank	Quarterly Service Charge	<b>£18.00</b> (£0 VAT)

### Bank Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

Unity Current Account 4775	£ 27,550.83
Unity Deposit Account 4788	£ 39,541.44

**INCOME:**

- £ 2.44 – Interest a/c 20344788
- £54.00 – Essex Silk Painters 23/10 (U000036)
- £10.00 – Brentwood Ramblers THVH (BACS)
- £66.00 – Forest Pilates THVH (BACS)
- £12.50 – Galloway THVH 27/11 (BACS)
- £39.60 – High Country Ladies THVH (U000037)
- £54.00 – Essex Silk Painters THVH 6/11 (U000037)
- £44.00 – Including Sport THVH BACS
- £54.00 – Essex Silk Painters THVH 4/12 (U000038)

### b. Update on Cllr Tallon change of signatory

Cllr Tallon advised that he had struggled to obtain the internet log on, and that getting hold of Unity was extremely time consuming and difficult. The Clerk advised that she had never had a problem, and asked Cllr Tallon to let her know if there were further problems.

### c. Bank Interest

Councillors **NOTED** that following an increase in the base rate from 0.1% to 0.25% on 16<sup>th</sup> December, the interest rates on the deposit account will change from 17<sup>th</sup> December, and Unity have advised they will write to the Council in January to confirm.

### P14.881 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

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

- 10<sup>th</sup> March – 5.30pm Toot Hill Village Hall
- 12<sup>th</sup> May – 5.30pm Toot Hill Village Hall, followed by Annual Meeting of the Parish 7pm
- 14<sup>th</sup> July – 5.30pm Toot Hill Village Hall
- 8<sup>th</sup> September – 5.30pm Toot Hill Village Hall
- 10<sup>th</sup> November - 5.30pm Toot Hill Village Hall

Councillors were reminded that meetings must be held in person.

Signed ..... Date .....