

STANFORD RIVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Ware Farm, The Street, High Roding, Essex, CM6 1NT
Tel: 077 377 36365 **Email:** stanfordriverspc@gmail.com

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 11th September 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
 6th September 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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To **RECEIVE** any apologies for absence.

2. OTHER ABSENCES

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

3. 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.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To **APPROVE**, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th July 2025, and note the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting dated 28th August 2025, as attached to the agenda.

5. 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

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Contained within the EFDC Council Agenda for Monday 15th September is a report summarising business cases for different options for Local Government Reform, with EFDC Councillors being asked to indicate their preferred business case option to Cabinet, so that Cabinet can formally endorse one option to Government by the submission deadline of 26 September 2025. A full copy of the report can be found at:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/g12511/Public%20reports%20pack%2015th-Sep-2025%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>. This has implications for the future of the Parish, and Councillors are asked to read the report if possible. The Clerk will provide an update at the meeting.

7. 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:

- Various emails from applicant of EPF/0960/25 following refusal of application
- EALC AGM being held via Zoom 25th September 6.30pm to 9.30pm
- Rural Crime Forum co-hosted by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst and Kemi Badenoch MP, Friday, 12th September, 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM at Ugley Village Hall, Cambridge Rd, Bishop's Stortford, Essex CM22 6HR. This forum is an opportunity to hear updates on rural crime and community safety initiatives and have the chance to raise any concerns or questions you may have about rural crime.
- EFDC LCLC on 18th September 2025 – questions submitted to the meeting are attached to the agenda for Councillors information.
- Damaged HGV sign Mutton Row reported to ECC 14/8/25 (Ref: 2990839) – No update.
- Impassable footpath between Little End and Marden Ash reported to ECC 6/8/25 (Ref: 2994272) – No update. Asked to close it if no action going to be taken

8. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

To **RECEIVE** an update on the Stanford Rivers Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

9. DOMAIN REGISTRAR

From 31st December 2025, this Councils current domain host (HCL data) will no longer be hosting .GOV domains. As such, it is recommended that this Councils email host (CloudNext) should be our new domain host. The cost to transfer the domain is £7.99. The Clerk is currently awaiting the Transfer Authorisation Code from the current supplier. Councillors are reminded that the domain host for a .GOV domain must be one of those on an approved Registrar List agreed by Government.

10. OPEN SPACES AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

1. Complaint received from local resident that the small triangle located at the junction of School Road and Berwick Lane is no longer being cut. Clerk responded and explained the situation.
2. To receive an update on the response from the Grounds maintenance contractor on cutting the verges through Hare Street.
3. To receive an update as to any responses regarding the proposed village sign on Jubilee Green.
4. To note that a branch which had become loose on a tree at Jubilee Green has had to be removed.
5. To note the flower boxes have now been filled with flowers. These will probably need replacing once per year, and should be considered at budget time.

11. BERWICK LANE STATUS – PROTECTED LANE / LHP APPLICATION

As agreed at the July meeting, the Clerk has submitted a formal LHP application for additional signage regarding Berwick Lane to deter its use as both a rat run and by HGVs. This application was supported by ECC Cllr Mclvor, however the response received from ECC LHP advised that an LHP review recently took place and they have been advised that any new requests are to be put on hold. ECC Cllr Cunningham asked that the following response be returned to any application - *"Thank you for your email. Please be aware that Local Highways Panels are concentrating on setting out and agreeing the schemes that will be delivered this year and therefore new requests for schemes of this nature are unable to be progressed further for a temporary period during this year to allow the teams to focus on delivery of outstanding schemes. Currently, we have no further information on when schemes requests will start to be accepted again. All the information will be kept on file for future reference."*

12. VEHICULAR SPEEDING AND SAFETY MATTERS IN THE PARISH

1. **Community Speedwatch** - To receive an update on matters concerning the Community Speedwatch Programme.
2. **School Road surface** – No update from Cllr Mclvor
3. **HGVs** – one further complaint received regarding lorries using the Stewarts Farm on School Road accessing the rural lanes off the A414. Response advised to keep record of any out of hours activity.

13. HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

To **NOTE** that the survey ends on 26th September. It is hoped an interim update will be available at the meeting.

14. RURAL FLOOD RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP 2024 2026

Councillors are asked to note that the ACRE and NALC have come together to launch a new survey designed to help parish and town councils enhance their flood resilience. The short survey aims to capture what information and support parish and town councils need to better plan for flooding. This initiative supports the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership Work Plan, which aims to help communities plan for flooding. The survey results are intended to directly shape the development of practical resources tailored to local needs, ensuring

that any future resources are genuinely helpful and relevant. The consultation ran until 29th August 2025, and as such the Clerk has responded on behalf of the Council setting out the issues faced on rural roads which are regularly flooded, the erosion of ditches which allow fields to properly drain, and the lack of action taken by ECC.

15. EFDC CHARGE FOR GREEN WASTE COLLECTION

Councillors are asked to the **NOTE** that at the 21st July 2025 EFDC meeting of Cabinet, the following was agreed with regard to the introduction of a separate, paid garden waste service for Epping Forest Residents:

- That the Cabinet agreed EFDC would develop a waste collection service to collect food and garden waste separately and implement in April 2026, subject to the availability of food waste vehicles. Food waste would be collected weekly as per legislation and garden waste to be collected fortnightly.
- That the Cabinet agreed that officers continued discussions with Essex County Council regarding funding to implement the new food waste collection service.
- That the Cabinet agreed the introduction of an annual garden waste subscription charge be determined as part of 2026-27 budget setting process, that would ensure the service was at least cost neutral.

This matter was 'called in' at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting of 5th August 2025, with the committee asked if they wished for EFDC Cabinet to reconsider this matter. This was not voted for

16. EFDC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

EFDC is currently consulting on a draft charging schedule for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be set for the Epping Forest District. The CIL is a locally set charge (referred to as a levy) on new development which the Council can choose to introduce. The levy is based on the size and type of development and once set is mandatory to pay and non-negotiable. The funds raised would be distributed by the District Council to provide infrastructure which is required to support new development within the local area. This infrastructure could include roads, transport facilities, flood defences, education facilities, medical facilities, sporting and recreation facilities, and open spaces. Currently when new development proposals are approved by the Council, it is common for an agreement to be made (known as a planning obligation, section 106 agreement or developer contribution) for developers to either provide new or improved infrastructure, or financial contributions towards the provision of new or improved infrastructure in the area. This could include highways improvements, new or improved parks and play facilities, and services and facilities such as new or improved schools and health facilities. The CIL will not replace the Council's current methods of obtaining infrastructure and funding through planning obligations. The CIL provides an additional mechanism to obtain financial contributions towards new and improved infrastructure. The levy may be payable on development which creates a new or additional internal area, where the gross internal area of new build is 100 square metres or more. Development which is less than 100 square metres, but which involves the creation of a new house or flat, may also be liable to pay the levy. Some developments may be eligible for discretionary relief or exemption from the levy. This includes residential annexes and extensions, social housing, charitable development, and houses and flats which are built by 'self-builders'. For Parish Councils without a Neighbourhood Plan, the local community typically receives 15% of CIL revenues from development in their area. For Councils with a Neighbourhood Plan, this share increases to 25%, and it is paid directly to the parish or town council to spend on infrastructure or anything else that supports development of the area. Full details of the CIL can be found at: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-infrastructure-levy/>. The deadline for responding to the consultation is Tuesday 9th September 2025.

17. EXTERNAL AUDIT 2024/2025

At the time of printing the agenda, the Clerk had received a query with regard to the external audit for 24/25, as follows:

- The figure in Section 2, Box 7 of the prior year comparative column (£77,881) does not agree to the prior year final signed AGAR (£71,881)
- Section 2, Box 10 variance explanation: In order for us to calculate our analytical review exercise, I would appreciate it if you could provide the value of the 3 PWLB payments in 2024/25

Whilst both queries were answered, the auditor has indicated that it intends to submit an 'except for' matter in its formal response as follows:

- Section 2, Box 7 of the prior year is incorrect due to a transposition error and should read £71,881
- Section 2, Box 8 of the prior year is incorrect due to a transposition error and should read £71,881

It is hoped that the full response from the auditor will be available in time to be formally reported at the meeting.

18. PLANNING APPLICATIONS & MATTERS

- a. Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** the following matters:

1. To CONSIDER any planning applications submitted to the Parish Council for comment as detailed below

EPF/1704/25	Toot Hill Golf Club, School Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PU	Retrospective Application for the Retention of the Greenkeeper's Building and the Golf Tee Shop. https://eppingforestdc.my.site.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv00000AgU5b
2. To <i>NOTE</i> any planning applications that have been responded to via the Clerks delegated powers		
EPF/1216/25	Land East of Tawney Common, Theydon Mount, Epping, Essex, CM16 7PU	Proposed Solar Farm (30MW) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (30MW) with ancillary infrastructure including access, landscape and ecology improvements
<p><i>Whilst this application is in the neighbouring Parish of Stapleford Tawney, access to the site is proposed via rural routes in the Parish of Stanford Rivers. As such, the Parish Council has a vested interest in this application. Overall, the Parish Council supports the objections of both the people of Stapleford Tawney, and Stapleford Tawney Parish Council, and OJECTS to the application for the following reasons.</i></p> <p><i>Following the screening opinion application (EPF/0674/258), the decision of EFDC was that “the development would not give rise to significant effects on the wider environment and therefore the proposal is not considered to require an Environmental Impact Assessment”, also referencing the recent high court judgement in Drayton Manor Farms Ltd v Stratford-Upon-Avon District Council [2025] EWHC 775 (Admin) which set out that two solar farms situated adjacent to each other should not be considered as a single scheme. The planning officer did, however, make it clear that the cumulative impact of the adjacent solar farm site Nickerlands Farm granted consent under EPF/1546/24 needs to be considered with any future submission, and that such cumulative impacts would likely be related to air quality in relation to human health and traffic from the construction. Thus, the Parish Council would like to set out a number of points:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The high court judgement referenced above clearly gives cart blank to applicants and landowners to ‘frame’ and ‘time’ planning applications for solar farms so as to avoid the need for a full Environmental Impact Assessments. This will be to the detriment to local communities, and we suggest has been purposefully designed to remove barriers to solar farm applications. This is unfair and morally wrong. The Parish Council is therefore <u>very pleased</u> to see that the Planning Officer has still recognised the potential impact of having two solar farms adjoining each other.</i> <i>2. The applicant has chosen Church Road / School Road / through Toot Hill Village / Epping Road / Tawney Lane as the proposed construction routing plan, which the applicant has suggested would take up to 12 months. Traffic for the adjacent approved Nickerlands Solar Farm will be routed via the A113 / Tawney Lane, and one can only assume that the applicant for this application has chosen this new route so as to avoid coming head on with HGVs along Tawney Lane which are accessing the Nickerlands Site. There is no justification provided by the applicant as to why this new route via Church Road has been chosen. It should be noted that there is a very busy industrial site located on School Road (Stewarts Farm) where the Parish Council has recently had cause to contact EFDC Enforcement about the number and frequency of HGVs using this site which are causing issues locally. It is ENTIRELY IMPOSSIBLE for two HGVs to pass AT ANY POINT along any of the roads and lanes mentioned in this objection, and to route vehicles along these roads WILL CAUSE CHAOS LOCALLY, especially if this application is approved and both solar farms are constructed at the same time.</i> <p><i>The average width of a 16.5m Articulated Lorry (of which there are expected to be 1,124 movements according to the applicants Traffic Assessment) is 2.55m. The average width of Church Lane, School Road, and Tawney Lane is 3.65m. Just because you can legally drive an articulated lorry on a rural road, doesn’t mean it can and should be done. Rural roads are primarily link roads used by cars and farm traffic. Farm traffic is designed to travel off road, so if a car and tractor come face to face on these roads, there is some scope for the tractor to move to the side. What will happen if two 16.5m articulated lorries come face to face with one another? Failure to seriously consider the consequences of this for all road users is short sighted and ignorant. The <u>very best case scenario</u> is that the verges and ditches along these routes will be completely ruined, causing future flooding issues for local people and road users, damaged roads (which ECC have no funding to fix), mud all over the roads, and traffic being at a standstill whilst two lorries decide who’s going to reverse.</i></p> <p><i>Should the district council be minded to grant this application, there should be conditions attached which require the applicant to make good any damage to verges, ditches and road surface along the routes used within a specified timescale after construction. This should be done in conjunction</i></p>		

with, and to the satisfaction of, ECC and the Local Parish Council. In addition, the district council should consider the cumulative impact of both developments being granted permission, and the impact in terms of if both are constructed during the same time period.

The Parish Council would like to draw your attention to the final paragraph in the ECC Protected Lanes Assessment December 2015 used as part of the Local Plan process which states:

*“The most significant cause of failure of existing Protected Lanes to meet the newly set threshold for Protected Lane status was as a result of agricultural practices. A number of the lanes had their ditches, hedges and verges removed with agricultural production taken up to the very edge of the metalled road. Others failed to meet the criteria due to road improvements **following deterioration in their physical condition during the period since their original designation, which affected their score for Integrity**. This suggests that, with the ever increasing rise in the number, size and diversity of motorised vehicles using minor rural roads (CPRE, 1996), Protected Lane status may not in itself be enough to **secure the long term future of these important historic landscape features**. **Consideration should therefore be given to exploring options and partnerships for influencing user behaviour and applying intelligent and positive measures of highway management that will serve to encourage local journeys to be made on bicycle or foot, and for recreation, and reduce the impact of vehicles on the historic fabric of lanes, whilst maintaining their local character** (e.g. CPRE, 2003).”*

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

NIL

4. To **NOTE** any other planning matters

Nil at the time of printing the agenda.

5. To **NOTE** any planning decisions by EFDC

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.)	01/08/2025 Approved <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/1106/25	5, Toot Hill Road, Ongar, CM5 9QW	Two storey side and part rear extension, rear dormer.	11/08/2025 Approved <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/0647/25	Land Adjacent Former White Bear PH, 149 London Road, Sanford Rivers, CM5 9QF	Proposed Annex & Outbuilding to be used in conjunction with main house.	18/08/2025 Refused for reasons of Green Belt <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/1343/25	6 Barn Mead, Toot Hill Road, Ongar, CM5 9SE	Change of use of Green Belt land to permeable access / turning area.	20/08/2025 Refused for reasons of Green Belt and harm to local area <i>PC Objected</i>
EPF/1311/25	3 Church Cottages, Rosary Cottage, Church Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PS	Erection of a two-storey side extension and a part single, part double-storey rear extension.	20/08/2025 Approved <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/1282/25	56 Epping Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9SQ	Prior approval for additional storey on the principal part of the bungalow with windows only on the front and rear.	28/08/2025 Approved <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/1563/25 <i>DRC</i>	Coalfields Farm, Epping Road, Colliers Hatch, Epping, CM16 7PX	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 & 4 (Ecology) on planning permission EPF/0393/25 (Construction of two extensions to agricultural building).	28/08/2025 Approved <i>PC unable to comment</i>

19. TOOT HILL VILLAGE HALL

- a) Solar Panels – EIC certificate requested. To receive an update on selling energy back to the grid. IWA certificate received.

- b) Accident reporting Policy – as a result of the recent accident at the village hall, the Council is asked to adopt a formal Accident Reporting Policy to be provided to all staff, Councillors, and users of the Toot Hill Village Hall, a copy of which is attached to the agenda. A copy of any adopted policy will also be posted in the halls notice boards. Councillors are also asked to note that a new accident book has been purchased.
- c) Notice Board – to consider the purchase or renovation of the notice board in the Toot Hill Village Hall.
- d) Annual Gas Boiler safety check taking place Monday 8th September.
- e) Five Year electrical Inspection – Village and community halls should undergo a formal Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) once every 5 years. This was completed on 17th July 2025. The EICR checks:
- The condition of wiring and electrical components
 - Compliance with current safety standards
 - Identification of any defects or risks
 - Recommendations for remedial work
- Attached to the agenda is the full EICR report, along with a quote to complete the necessary remedial action. Whilst no C1 reports have been identified, there are a number of C2 and C3 reports. Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** this report, and what action they would like to take. The Clerk will provide a further update at the meeting.
- f) Following a complaint received from a neighbouring property, works were undertaken to cut back a section of overgrown brambles / weeds / trees at the back of the village hall which were intruding into a neighbours garden. The contractor could not go over it with a flail as there was too much wire and tree stumps there so the spoil needed to be removed from site. The Clerk agreed with the contractor that once it was properly cleared, they should spend 30 mins cutting the wire out to make it easier to maintain going forward, and that this might have been the reason the previous contractor didn't keep it cut as regular because it was very challenging.

20. TOOT HILL VILLAGE SHOW

To receive a report on the success of this years Village Show.

21. NEWS AND VIEWS

Next issue being sent November 2025.

22. FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

Reference	To	For	Amount
BACS	Adriana Jones	Clerks Salary Aug & Sep 2025	£1,167.92
BACS	HMRC	PAYE Aug & Sep 2025	£292.00
BACS	HMRC	Employers NI Aug & Sep 2025	£93.88
BACS	D Wickham	THVH Cleaning and phone box tidy July & Aug 2025, & Chair checks	£335.94
D/D	PWLB	Payment public works loan	£1,337.63
D/D	EDF	Toot Hill VH Electricity Supply	£15.05 (£0.72 VAT)
BACS	Amazon	10 stackable Chairs for Toot Hill Hall	£379.00 (VAT £TBC)
BACS	DGM Electrical Solutions	5 year Electrical Inspection THVH	£240.00
BACS	A Jones	Accident Book, Bolt Cropper for flowers, Mileage	£119.46 (VAT £6.56)
BACS	Thornwood Grounds Maint	Various Grounds Maintenance works – 2 months, plus notice board TH, cut rear of THVH, Spraying layby nr Traceys Farm	£1,412.40 (VAT £235.40)
BACS	Calor Gas	Standing charge and replenish Gas 11/7	£552.06 (VAT £26.29)

BACS	North Weald Bassett PC	Printing News and Views July	£120.00
BACS	Viking Direct	Stamps and labels N&V	£286.07 (VAT £4.18)

Bank Balances as at 31st August 2025

Unity Current Account 4775	£ 2,696.94
Unity Deposit Account 4788	£ 46,164.94

INCOME:

- £ 56.00 – Pilates hire June
- £294.00 – Essex Silk Painters July 3-5
- £262.90 – Folk Club hire Apr-July
- £158.40 – High Country Ladies Group – hire April-Dec 2025
- £227.50 – High Country History Group – Hire April-Nov 2025
- £111.60 – Parker / Scott – Hire party 10/8
- £ 65.00 – Sue Thomas Silk Club – hire May

b. To review the bank reconciliation up to 31st August 2025 alongside the bank statements.

23. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS/EVENTS

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

- 13th November 2025
- Need to pick a date for a Christmas event in the Village Hall

24. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

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

- 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)