

Stanford Rivers PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 13th November 2025

Time: 5.30pm

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

PRESENT:

Councillors (3) Cllr Glover (Chairman), Cllr Hollington, Cllr Tallon

* for part of meeting

Also in Attendance (1) - Adriana Jones – Clerk

Members of the Public (1)

Members of the Press (0)

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Purkiss from Theydon Bois Parish Council to the meeting. Cllr Purkiss had worked with EFDC and ECC regarding the poor state of finger posts in the county. The Chairman agreed Cllr Purkiss could address the Council under the relevant agenda item.

P14.1405 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr Jackson, Cllr Mrs Jackman, Cllr Adams and Cllr Saridja. EFDC Clive Amos had also given his apologies.

P14.1406 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

P14.1407 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

P14.1408 MINUTES

Councillors **APPROVED** the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 11th September 2025.

P14.1409 FINGER POSTS

The Clerk advised that Cllr Anthony Purkiss, Councillor for Theydon Bois PC and champion of finger posts in the district, had approached the Clerk regarding a number of Finger Posts that were either missing, damaged or in need of repair. These were:

- Tawney Lane / Epping Road (Parish Tawney Common) - missing finger posts – cast iron
- Drapers Corner / Mutton row – Replacement needed
- Berwick Lane / Toot Hill Road – Refurbishment / Replacement needed

The Clerk placed on the screen for members information images of the finger posts in question and their location. It was noted that the finger post on Tawney Lane no longer had actual fingers. It was also noted that in terms of both EFDC and ECC, there wasn't a great focus on the retention and maintenance of finger posts. It was noted that the quote received to replace the wooden finger posts, excluding VAT and installation, was £1,370 or £1,175 each if you purchase two at the same time. Councillors were asked to consider if they wished to fund the replacement of these finger posts. It was noted that within the Highways earmarked reserve there was £5,820.

Councillors discussed this matter, and felt that these finger posts were an important part of the Parish heritage, and were part of what represents the rural character and identity of the area. If these were lost, it would be a loss for the Parish as a whole. The Chairman advised Councillors that both himself and Cllr Purkiss had worked together in the past to save finger posts in the district, albeit not in this parish.

Cllr Purkiss addressed the Council, stating that these types of finger posts were an important part of our rural street scenery, and it was very important that they are not ignored. He explained the work he had undertaken with both the leader of EFDC and ECC, setting out that ECC had passed on the responsibility for maintenance of such works to EFDC, and that a bespoke joiner and company had been found who renovate these posts. However the focus by EFDC had now waned. Councillors discussed the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation, setting out that this is the type of asset that would simply be lost.

After discussion, Councillors unanimously **AGREED** they would be willing to fund the replacement of the two wooden posts in the parish on both Drapers Corner and Berwick Lane / Toot Hill Road up to a maximum of

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£3,000 to include installation. It was also **AGREED** after installation they should be included on the Parish Council insurance schedule, which would cover them for any future accidents or issues.

P14.1410 MEMBERS REPORTS

- Chairman's Report – The Chairman reported that the middle left hand halogen light, and the third bollard light at the village hall were not working. He also reported that he had attended the Waste meeting at EFDC, which he found very useful.
- Vice Chairman's Report – No report.
- District and County Councillor reports - No report
- Parish Councillor reports – Cllr Hollington raised the issue of road work signs being left on the carriageway long after road works have been completed, stating that he simply could not understand why, when works are completed, these signs couldn't be moved to the side of the road to allow the free flow of traffic. The Chairman stated that all these works were subcontracted to different parties, and Cllr Hollington stated that when these contracts are updated this should be amended to ensure signs are removed swiftly. It was accepted this was frustrating, however this was out of the control on this Council. It was noted that the Ringway Jacobs contract was currently being renegotiated. There was also an unknown about how this would be dealt with when local government reorganisation came into being, given a countywide contract would be in place.

It was also reported that the signs on the location on Blake Hall Road bend where the accident took place and the young person died had still not been repaired, and it was agreed the Clerk would report this to ECC Highways.

P14.1411 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Clerk provided a brief update on Local Government Reorganisation, advising that final submissions had now been submitted to the Government regarding possible options for Local Government Reorganisation. Full details can be found at <https://www.essexlgrhub.org/proposals>. EFDC and ECC supported a three tier proposal which would see Epping Forest merge with Harlow, Maldon, Chelmsford and Brentwood districts. The Government is expected to run a public consultation before the end of the year, with a recommendation to the Minister on a final proposal expected in March 2026. Councillors are asked to note that elections for the Greater Essex Mayor will be taking place in May 2026, along with any relevant district and parish elections.

P14.1412 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Members **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the Clerk as follows:

- EFDC Waste Event 12th November at Civic Offices – The Chairman attended.
- News article published by EFDC regarding planning (copy was attached to agenda)
- EFDC Local Council Liaison Committee meeting held 18th September. A number of questions were put to the committee by the EFDALC, and responses were received, a copy of which was attached to the agenda. Minutes are not yet available.
- Clerk has emailed Trevor Baker asking him to complete a review of the ditches by Tracey's Farm.
- Update on the Shonks Mill / River Roding project - <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementq.com/the-river-roding-project>
- Domain name has been moved to CloudNext for hosting.
- Clerk has long phone conversation with member of public who attended September meeting.

P14.1413 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

A written report had been received from Cllr Adams advising there was nothing much from the Facebook or WhatsApp groups. Information on the police reports is still pretty useless and is being actioned by the Epping Forest District NHW chair with the Police Inspector responsible. SRNHW have put forward ideas to make the reports more informative which should be fairly easy to implement, but police just seem to be slow in getting any development work done. At the moment all Cllr Adams receives from the report is information such as "Vehicle Theft - Passingford Ward", with no details of the type of vehicle, where it was or even if it's in our parish.

P14.1414 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND 2025/2026

Councillors noted that funding of up to £10,000 was available to voluntary organisations, community groups, residents' associations and Town and Parish Councils via the Essex County Council's Community Initiative Fund (CIF), which aims to strengthen local communities and make Essex an even better place to live, work and visit. Councillors were asked if they wanted the Clerk to apply for any funding for specific projects. Cllr Adams had suggested funding towards the new sign on Jubilee. Cllr Tallon suggested that perhaps a youth music group could be funded for a specific time, with musical instruments being provided and instructors. The Clerk advised she would look into both these projects, and if the criteria was met she would apply for funding.

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P14.1415 VEHICULAR SPEEDING AND SAFETY MATTERS IN THE PARISH

1. **Community Speedwatch** – no update.
2. **Shonks Mill Road** – Report received by Clerk of Navestock Parish Council that there is a safety issue in terms of white lining at its junction with the A113. This has been reported to ECC by Navestock, however we may need to consider escalating the matter based on safety, given ECC has advised it will be considered as part of planned maintenance works. Response received from ECC 2965295 - We have investigated, risk assessed and recorded this issue as requiring future non-urgent works. Councillors did not indicate any further action to be taken at this time.
3. **HGV Sign damaged Mutton Row** – (Ref: 2990839) – ECC updated states they have risk assessed this enquiry and determined that it does not need immediate action. ECC has recorded this issue and will continue to monitor the area during future inspections. The Clerk was asked to obtain a quote to refix the sign.
4. **Impassable Footway between Little End and Marden Ash** (Ref 2994272) – Update received from ECC which states that the issue raised does not meet ECC investigation level or their minimum requirements to be recorded as a defect at this time, and the enquiry is now closed. Clerk has contacted Cllr McIvor asking that he obtains an explanation as to why ECC has not deemed this a serious enough risk to investigate, given residents have to walk into a 60MPH road as the footway is not passable in places.

P14.1416 HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The Clerk advised that the survey had been extended by 14 days to allow any further additional responses received, and that reminders have been posted on the Council's social media pages. To date, 18 responses had been received, and the RCCE were working on the report to establish if there is a housing need, and if so what that is.

P14.1417 STANFORD RIVERS SIGN FOR JUBILEE GREEN

Councillors noted that Cllr Admas was continuing to work on the new sign for Jubilee Green. He is now in possession of the lettering (which was displayed on screen during the meeting), however Cllr Admas is hoping to get some help with digging and planting. It is hoped to place the sign roughly where the Yew Tree is sited, with the "garden" being an oval 3m x 2m, the sign being 2.4m wide set at 90 degrees to the road (lettering on both sides). The approximate location of the sign was also displayed during the meeting. Cllr Admas had advised the Clerk that after he had received the board and could see the size of it, he went over to Jubilee Green and paced it out, however it felt very odd looking at it from an adjacent point of view. The space from the road to the line of tree branches didn't allow enough room for it to look right proportionally. He had then thought about this alongside the Ongar Town Festival sign that is placed there every year and believes the sign would be just as visible being parallel to the road with more room to set it back. Councillors discussed this matter, and were not convinced that having the sign at this angle would have the same effect. As such, it was **AGREED** to hold a site meeting early in 2026 to determine the best positioning for the sign.

Cllr Admas had advised that he had been in contact with someone with type setting skills who had agreed to help set the letter placement properly, and that he would be meeting him around the Christmas period. Once the layout is agreed he will stick all the letters to the board and begin painting. When that work is done he will source the posts and prepare them. It is hoped that the sign will be ready for installation just after Easter 2026.

P14.1418 BUDGET / PRECPET 2026/2027

Councillors were asked to advise the Clerk of any specific items they would like included for consideration under the budget and precept agenda item at the January meeting. Details should be sent to the Clerk prior to 15th December. Cllr Tallon advised that the hall could take up to 80 guests, and believed that more chairs were needed. He confirmed he would check the number and advised the Clerk prior to 15th December.

P14.1419 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Councillors **CONSIDERED** the following planning applications/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/2004/25	6, Lilac House, London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PH	Construction of a single self-build dwelling, alongside associated development.

*The Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this application.*

The Parish Council accepts the Inspectors position in terms of green belt, and that the only matter to be

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resolved is the EFSAC contribution, however no consideration has been given to the fact that by allocating the land as a separate dwelling, the number of available parking spaces for the donor dwelling (Lilac House - thought to be a minimum of 4 bedrooms), will reduce to 2 spaces. This would be contrary to the ECC adopted parking standards which would require such a property in this Low Connectivity location to have 3+ bedrooms, plus 0.25 visitor spaces. In addition, no visitor spaces are provided to the proposed new dwelling. Should the donor dwelling only have 3 bedrooms, it still does not allow sufficient space for any visitors. This needs to be addressed

In addition, it should also be noted that the applicant has not provided any evidence to support the suggestion that this is a self build dwelling, i.e.

- Personal Involvement in the Build:
 - The applicant must be directly involved in the design and construction of the home.
 - This can include physically building the home or commissioning professionals to build it to the applicant's specifications.
- Intended Occupation:
 - The dwelling must be built to be occupied as the applicant's main residence.
 - It cannot be built solely for investment or resale purposes.

EFDC Local Plan Policy H1 Housing Mix and Accommodation Types Part C(i) identifies that self build properties will only be supported where the location is appropriate in terms of access to facilities, services and public transport. Little End is not a sustainable location, has no public transport, and has very limited facilities.

The Parish Council is willing to attend and speak at any planning committee meeting if necessary.

EPF/2108/25	22, Murrells Farm, London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9QE	Prior Approval for change of use of agricultural building into two new dwellings. NO CONCERNS
EPF/1831/25	Land adjacent to Willows End, Cumley Road, Toot Hill, CM5 9SJ	Construction of new dwelling. Resubmission of refused application.

The Parish Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, however if permission is granted, it is requested that the following conditions are attached to said permission:

1. Require the applicant take out indemnity insurance to cover any structural damage or issues created to the adjacent two properties, most importantly Elm Cottage, covering at least 5 years, and a copy of this to be provided to the Local Planning Authority prior to construction.
2. Restriction in terms of construction hours limited to 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday, and 9am to 12pm Saturdays, with no works on Sundays or bank holidays. The reason for this is due to the very close proximity of Elm Cottage, the significant noise that piling makes, and the creation of a basement, will create vibrations that will affect the amenity of residents during construction.

The applicant to provide the Local Planning Authority with written details on a monthly basis of the regular monitoring (as detailed within section 3 of the structural engineers report reproduced below and highlighted in red) so this can be assessed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that there is no structural concern to Elm Cottage, the Highway, or any other neighbouring property.

EPF/1970/25	12, Surrywood, London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PH	Removal of existing attached side garage and replace with one and half storey side extension, construction of two front-facing dormer windows and one rear dormer, addition of new front porch and infill of recessed front entrance. NO OBJECTION
EPF/1952/25	Stanford Hall Farm, Church Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9QG	Grade II Listed building consent for restoration and repair to building fabric and structure. NO OBJECTION , subject to not being used as a separate dwelling

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

EPF/2196/25 DRC	Land at Nickerlands, Berwick Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PX	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 6 (BNG - HMMP), 12 (Farmland Bird Mitigation Strategy), 15 (Drainage) and 18 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) on planning permission (EPF/1546/24) (Proposed Installation, operation and decommissioning of renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with transformer/inverter stations, site
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		accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements).	
EPF/2034/25 DRC	Land adjacent to Maybanks Farm, Ongar, CM5 9SQ	Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 6 Contaminated Land of EPF/1774/21 (Removal of existing barns and construction of a new detached dwelling, including new relocated vehicle access to Epping Road).	
EPF/1949/25	56, Epping Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9SQ	Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 4 Construction Management Report of EPF/1828/25 (Prior approval for additional storey on the principal part of the bungalow with windows only on the front and rear).	
EPF/1941/25	22, Murrells Farm, London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9QE	Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 3 Regulation 77, 4 Foul Water Disposal, 5 Details of materials and 6 EVP's of EPF/0522/24 (Change of use from agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses).	
EPF/1839/25	Colemans Farm, Toot Hill Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9QN	Certificate of Lawful Development for retention of three huts, tree house, and associated decking areas used for short term accommodation purposes. [see point 2 below]	
4. To NOTE any other planning matters			
<p>1. Land Adjacent Former White Bear PH, 149 London Road, Sanford Rivers, CM5 9QF Appeal APP/J1535/D/25/3375004 — Proposed Annex & Outbuilding to be used in conjunction with main house. Appeal against refusal of permission – start date 3/11/25 – comments to be made within 28 days. The Parish Council had no objection to this application, subject to a condition being imposed that the annexe is ancillary to the main dwelling, is not to be used as a separate dwelling, and that permitted development rights are removed from the address. Proposal was refused for Green Belt reasons.</p> <p>2. Colemans Farm, Toot Hill Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9QN - As briefly mentioned during the planning Zoom session held in October, and as emailed to Councillors on 12/10, following an appeal, the Enforcement notice issued on 7th May 2024 to cease the use of the land for the provision of tourist accommodation and associated recreational activities was quashed by the Planning Inspectorate. As such, a Certificate of Lawful development was applied for (EPF/1839/25) was applied for, and this was granted as being Lawful by EFDC on 3rd November 2025. Councillors expressed their frustration at this situation.</p>			
5. To NOTE any planning decisions by EFDC			
EPF/1727/25	Land at Nickerlands, Berwick Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PX	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 5 (Details), 8 (Tree Protection), 10 (CEMP Biodiversity) and 11 (Soil Management Plan) on planning permission (EPF/1546/24) (Proposed Installation, operation and decommissioning of renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with transformer/inverter stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements).	Granted 16/10/25 DRC so PC unable to comment
EPF/1949/25	56, Epping Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9SQ	Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 4 Construction Management Report of EPF/1282/25 (Prior approval for additional storey on the principal part of the bungalow with windows	Granted 24/10/25 DRC so PC unable to comment

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		only on the front and rear).	
EPF/0718/25	Land adjacent to Epping Road and School Road Toot Hill Stanford Rivers (Eastings 551534 Northing 202297)	Outline planning application (all matters reserved except for access points to the development proposed) for 10 dwellings, parking, landscaping, associated infrastructure and demolition.	Refused 01/09/2025 Reasons – green belt, insufficient info to determine impact on heritage asset, no S106 agreement PC Objected to this application
EPF/0960/25	22, Murrells Farm, London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9QE	Demolition of a former farm building granted change of use to residential and the erection of a new dwelling to a similar mass and footprint.	Refused 04/09/2025 Reasons – green belt, heritage harm, not high quality accommodation, and S106 agreement PC Supported this application
EPF/1302/25 & EPF/1314/25	41, Berwick Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PY	Single storey rear extension with internal remodelling, and Listed Building application for the same.	Granted 09/09/2025 PC had no objection
EPF/1210/25	3 Church Cottages, Rosary Cottage, Church Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PS	Proposed 6.00m deep, single storey rear extension with a maximum roof ridge height of 3.85m and height to eaves being 2.85m.	Prior Approval not required 19/09/2025 PC not able to comment
EPF/1602/25	Oak Lodge Stud, Mill Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9SF	Certificate of Lawful Development for proposed enlargement, improvement and other alteration to a dwelling house, built pursuant to planning permission EPF/0438/25.	Lawful 26/09/2025 PC not able to comment
EPF/1573/25	12, Surrywood, London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, CM5 9PH	Removal of the attached side garage, construction of two front-facing dormers, addition of a front porch, and infill of the recessed front entrance.	Granted 30/09/2025 PC had no objection

P14.1420 CHRISTMAS

Councillors were asked if they would like to erect any Christmas Trees or lights in the Parish this year, and if so where. Cllr Tallon updated members on the Toot Hill Christmas tree event which was open to all members of the public. After discussion, it was **AGREED** not to erect any lights or trees this year.

P14.1421 TOOT HILL VILLAGE HALL

- a) **Solar Panels** – Councillors noted that the Clerk had chased the EIC certificate, and that prior to selling energy back to the grid a replacement meter was needed - one which measures electricity every half an hour (required for SEG). The Clerk had arranged this, with installation scheduled for the morning of 16th December. The Clerk advised that according to the latest EDF energy statement, the account was £3,387.92 in credit, however this couldn't be taken on face value as electricity companies often re-evaluate the charges based on the last 6 months energy use. The Clerk also advised that the Post office had responded to the formal address request for the hall, apologising for delay in registering the address of the hall.
- b) **Five Year electrical Inspection** – At the September meeting, Councillors were presented with a quote to complete the necessary remedial work following the 5 year electrical inspection of the Hall. It was agreed at that meeting that councillors would contact the Clerk with the names of other electricians so that additional quotes could be obtained. These have not been forthcoming. As such, the Clerk had contacted a number of local electricians she has found on the internet, provided Councillors with an update. After discussion, it was agreed to accept the quote for £1,600 to complete all the works. In addition, the contractor should be asked to look at the two columns at the entrance the hall that were also out of action.

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c) **Maintenance** – The Clerk advised she had received an email from a hall user stating that at a recent event there were problems with exterior lighting again. Two of the solar lights, numbers three and four from the road, were out and one of the lights over the entrance were not working. In addition, a query was raised about the ceiling boards of the hall, with the hall users stating they did used to have spares in the garage for replacements, stating there were about twenty currently in situ that were in poor condition. The Clerk advised she would look into this, however from memory believed that we had looked at this before and the tiles in the garage were the wrong size, with the correct sized tiles being over £100 each (bespoke).

P14.1422 NEWS AND VIEWS

Next issue was schedule to be sent November, however as the Council is not having any Christmas celebrations this year, this will now be postponed until after the budget / precept meeting.

P14.1423 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a. On 16th September payment of £379.00 was approved and sent to the Clerk for the purchase of 10 new Chairs for the Village hall. Following this, the Clerk managed to source the chairs for a cheaper cost - £272.60. This left an amount of £106.40 with the Clerk. As such, the Clerk has used some of this additional money for the purchase of new first aid supplies, an eye wash kit and sign, and a burns kit for the Village Hall, the total cost of which was £54.23. This leaves an outstanding amount of £52.17. Councillors **AGREED** this money will be used to offset any future expenditure of the Clerk for which reimbursement would be required.

b. The following payments were approved:

Reference	To	For	Amount
BACS	Adriana Jones	Clerks Salary Oct & Nov 2025	£1,167.92
BACS	HMRC	PAYE Oct & Nov 2025	£292.00
BACS	HMRC	Employers NI Oct & Nov 2025	£93.88
BACS	D Wickham	THVH Cleaning and phone box tidy Sep & Oct 2025	£272.33
BACS	Thornwood Grounds Maint	Various Grounds Maintenance works – 2 months,	£932.40 (VAT £155.40)
BACS	Calor Gas	Standing charge	£20.59 (VAT £0.98)
BACS	North Weald Bassett PC	Remembrance Sunday wreaths and luncheon	£90.00

Bank Balances as at 31st October 2025

Unity Current Account 4775	£ 2,454.13
Unity Deposit Account 4788	£ 39,421.45

INCOME: £ 256.51 – Interest Deposit Account
£ 84.00 - Essex Silk Painters Sep (U000067)
£ 84.00 – Essex Silk Painters Oct (U000068)
£ 42.00 - Pilates Hire July Aug 8/9/25

c. The Chairman reviewed the bank reconciliation up to 31st October 2025 alongside the bank statements.

P14.1424 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS/EVENTS

Councillors **NOTED** the date of the next meetings:

- 8th January 2025
- 19th March 2025 (note this is the third Thursday in the month)
- 14th May 2025
- 9th July 2025 (*this date may move to 16th July*)
- 10th September 2025
- 12th November 2025

P14.1425 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Virtual meeting attendance equipment (January meeting)

Meeting closed 18:25

Signed

Date