Little Easton Parish Council Minutes

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Minutes of the **MEETING OF LITTLE EASTON PARISH COUNCIL** held at the **MEMORIAL HALL** on **WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7:00PM**

Councillor	Attendance
Cllr Liam Phillips	YES
Cllr Jacqui English	YES
Cllr Ian Sussams	NO
Cllr Emma Wells	NO
Cllr Chris Brooks	YES
VACANCY	
Dist Cllr Richard Haynes	NO - Meetings
Cnty Cllr Martin Foley	YES

2 member(s) of the public
Clerk – Mr Ian Brown

25/080	**NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Dist Cllr Richard Haynes – attending other meetings
25/081	**WITH REFERENCE TO THIS AGENDA MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO DECLARE ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE INTERESTS** None declared
25/082	**APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING 28 JANUARY 2026** ***RESOLUTION –*** Approve minutes of meeting 28 January 2026: Proposed Cllr Chris Brooks; Seconded Cllr Liam Phillips
25/083	**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION** Members of the public may raise questions about and comment on items on the Agenda OR of import. Session is limited to 15 minutes (3 minutes per person with no repetition of a previous question) ➢ **Mem Hall sign -** wording could be changed as it seemingly dissuades vehicles from turning in the car park, MHMC to be advised for their next meeting
25/084 ***Cllr Foley left at 6:30pm***	**RECEIVE THE DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS** Cnty Cllr Martin Foley – Report at **APPENDIX A** Dist Cllr – Report at **APPENDIX B**
25/085	**NOTE CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE – TO NOTE COMPLAINTS FROM UDC RE DOG WALKERS THROWING DOG WASTE BAGS AT THE BIN NEAR FALLOWS WATCH AND NOT PLACING IN THE BIN – REQUEST TO ADVISE COMMUNITY VIA SUCH AS SOCIAL MEDIA ETC**

25/086	**FINANCE – RECEIVE STATEMENT & AGREE PAYMENTS – REVIEWED BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PRIOR TO THIS MEETING COMMENCING** ***RESOLUTION –*** Approve finance statement and payments: Proposed Cllr Jacqui English; Seconded Cllr Chris Brooks Finance / Budget report **APPENDIX C** **25/086(i) - APPOINT AUTHORISER** Cllr Jacqui English **25/086(ii) – COUNCILLORS TO NOTE RECONCILED BANK STATEMENT & BUDGET PERFORMANCE** Noted **25/086(iii) – CLLR IAN SUSSAMS TO CONFIRM ACCESS TO BANK ACCOUNT** Not in attendance **25/086(iv) – RECEIVE UPDATE ON CURRENT OUTSTANDING PROJECTS** **A) FOUR SELF WATERING PLANTERS** – Invite SGS to install **B) ADDITIONAL LITTER / DOG WASTE BIN SITES** – Proceed with alternative location, CLERK to order with two posts from Glasdon **C) AGREE FUTURE BUDGET ITEM FOR THE ANNUAL REMOVAL OF LEAF FALL FROM THE PLAYINGFIELD EAST HEDGE LINE AND THE PLAY AREA AT EITHER £600 TO COLLECT AND REMOVE OR £250 TO BLOW ONTO FIELD ONCE DRY AND MOW / MULCH, PLUS ANY ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE TO WAR MEMORIAL AREA** Stain War Memorial wooden gate – Request to SGS for price, CLERK to AC TION Council discussed the matter and finally approved the leaf removal offer for this year by contractor at £600 and consider options going forward ***RESOLUTION –*** Approve leaf removal at £600: Proposed Cllr Jacqui English; Seconded Cllr Chris Brooks CLERK to ACTION **D) CONSIDER REQUEST TO PLACE THE CLERK IN THE LGPS WITH ECC AND ANY FUTURE CLERK** This matter had been previously discussed and agreed but the Clerk had deferred the matter for further consideration and has agreed to enter the scheme. ***RESOLUTION –*** Approve putting the Clerk in the Essex Local Government Pension Scheme: Proposed Cllr Liam Phillips; Seconded Cllr Chris Brooks CLERK to ACTION **25/086(v) CONSIDER TREE WORKS QUOTES RECEIVED AND CIRCULATED TO DATE-** **CONTRACTOR 1 - £4,230** **CONTRACTOR 2 - £7,500** **CONTRACTOR 3 - £3,420** ***RESOLUTION –*** Approve contract award to Contractor 1: Proposed Cllr Jacqui English; Seconded Cllr Liam Phillips CLERK to AC TION
25/087	**PLANNING – REVIEW AND COMMENT ON ANY CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS OR APPEALS AND OUTCOMES OR PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS** **UTT/25/3293/FUL | Erection of a greenhouse in the walled kitchen garden | Gardens Of Easton Lodge Park Road Little Easton Essex CM6 2BB** **Comment now**

	NO OBJECTION **RECEIVE ANY UPDATE ON LITTLE BARNS SITE** **UTT/25/2599/FUL** **PROPOSAL: Section 73A Retrospective application for use of site for children's swimming lessons. Change of use and extension of former pool house to ancillary cafe. New parking area, access and associated development.** **LOCATION: Little Barn Park Road** No update to report, keep item on the Agenda
25/088	**REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS** **PLAY AREA –** At last inspection it was looking OK **25/088(i) – CONSIDER OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT PROJECT PURCHASE / FUTURE BUDGET AND LOCATION –** Awaiting third quote; price indication of £12,000 **25/088(ii) – UPDATE ON FIXING OF DOG LEAD HOOKS PLUS SIGNAGE AT CHILDRENS PLAY AREA –** All fixed to play area, grateful thanks to Cllr Liam Phillips for his offering to complete the works **PARISH MAINTENANCE INCLUDING WAR MEMORIAL –** Request SGS to price for re-staining gate **SPEEDWATCH –** Illness, weather conditions and light levels has constrained when the group could operate; SID data to be downloaded and shared with the members
25/089	**THIS ITEM WAS A DUPLICATE OF 25/086(v) –** Tree works
25/090	**COUNCIL TO CONFIRM REVIEW OF THE FOLLOWING:-** The documents having been previously circulated and or updates placed on the website, members were invited to formally adopt the Statements and Policies ***RESOLUTION* –** Approve amendments, updates and new Policies: Proposed Cllr Liam Phillips; Seconded Cllr Chris Brooks **25/090(i) ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT** **25/090(ii) DATA PROTECTION POLICY AND PRIVACY STATEMENT** **25/090(iii) RISK REGISTER REVIEW** **25/090(iv) CONFIRM ASSET REGISTER IS CURRENT INCLUDING PLANTERS, DOG SIGNS AND BINS** **25/090(v) STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROLS**
25/091	**COUNCIL TO ADOPT THE LATEST ICO MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME** ***RESOLUTION* –** Approve adoption of the ICO Model Publication Scheme: Proposed Cllr Jacqui English; Seconded Cllr Chris Brooks
25/092	**ITEMS OF REPORT OR FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA –** Members to advise **25/092(i) CONFIRM APPOINTED CONTRIBUTOR TO 5P MAGAZINE** Cllr Jacqui English by 10 March and Cllr Chris Brooks by 10 April
25/093	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S) – 25 MARCH 2026 – CLOSE** 20:07

Signed……..Date…….

APPENDIX A

LEPC/ ECC REPORT

I was waiting on information to come in on ECC elections and Highways Panel details before updating the report…see attached letter and Highways Panel Report.

Briefly ,

At Full Council Essex CC passed a budget which will increase that element of Council Tax by 4 percent. (UDC confirmed under 3 percent percent)

ECC elections are going ahead

Essex CC local Highways Panel Report is very limited as does not yet show projects that have no funds yet. That will be available after the next Uttlesford Highways Panel meeting.

Btw…I am back on the saddle and getting to most meetings (18 this month) after having some hospital procedures. I have another procedure in February/March but aim to continue even if it is online rather than face to face again.

I hope to be with you tonight for your meeting if I can get back in time from an earlier residents meeting … my apologies if I am late.

Highways

I am quite aware that there will be some scepticism about claims on highways issues after the experience of your PC. However below is their latest report. Just follow the link.

Please follow this link to access the latest issue of Highways Highlights - Highways Highlights - January 2026.

County Members/District Council Leaders: Please share this with your fellow local councillors.

This will also be published on the website in the next few days and can be accessed via this link.
https://indd.adobe.com/view/af2d795e-213b-46cf-a56f-31bd271a7549

One way or another , I am involved with the following current issues at ECC……

ECC - Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Deadline extended for Essex residents to help shape health and wellbeing strategy

Residents of all ages are asked to help influence the future of health and wellbeing in Essex.

Essex residents are being given more time to share their views on the future of health and wellbeing across the county.

Residents of all ages, including young adults and teenagers, will be affected by the emerging Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2026–2029).

The strategy is being designed by the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board, led by Essex County Council.

It is the product of work across the system, involving the NHS and other health partners, local and county councils and other agencies like the police.

The strategy sets out a shared vision for health partners, highlighting the key priorities needed to help people in Essex live healthier, happier lives.

The strategy looks beyond healthcare to the wider factors that influence health. This includes jobs, housing, education, transport and the environment.

Residents are being asked to share their views on four key priorities that will shape health and wellbeing in Essex. These are:

1. Improving life chances for children and young people – ensuring children grow up happy, safe and free from the effects of poverty

2. Helping more people into and stay in work – supporting employment and skills development for future opportunities

3. Building healthy, resilient, and connected communities – creating places that promote health, connection and easy access to support

4. Creating opportunities to improve health and reduce the impact of poor health – encouraging healthy lifestyles, supporting mental wellbeing and reducing substance misuse

"ECC want to hear your views on the key priorities we've set out, so please have your say and help shape the areas you think we should focus on as health partners."

Essex residents can take part in the consultation until 10 February at https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/equalities-and-partnership/essexjhws-2026-29/

SUSTAINABLE UTTLESFORD ("SU")

I have received several enquiries from this parish concerning SU and it is gratifying that there is enthusiasm for the subject among members of the Community. It is essential for this support not to be seen to operate in a silo or be limited to individual Parishes working alone and we look forward to cooperating with our fellow Councillors across the District and other local groups to advance SU's aims.

On a wider scale, ECC has just published its Climate Action Report for 2025 which is now live on the ECC website under 2024 to 2025 Climate Action Report.

I have noted reports regarding UDC Decarbonisation Project and the scrutiny meeting (which I am not a member) I have looked at this at had some reservations on the scheme initially. So I understand some of the concerns.

However….

On balance I believe the decision to go ahead with the Decarbonisation Scheme proposed is the right one and sends an important message to the wider community.

I also want the London Road Offices and Chamber to be an important part of the new Unitary Authority albeit with reduced size and benefiting from rental income by letting more space off. This has happened successfully in other Unitary Authorities, and I believe that will be forcefully recommended in negotiations ahead.

ECC Connect to Work programme

This has just been announced today …Personally I am very pleased with this development by ECC…

Support will be delivered by Shaw Trust, Essex Cares Limited (ECL), and Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT).

Essex's £30.7 million Connect to Work programme has reached a major milestone in its efforts to break down barriers to employment, with three specialist providers now on board.

Connect to Work offers personalised employment support to residents with long-term health conditions, disabilities, or those in priority groups.

Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the scheme is being delivered in partnership with local authorities and expert providers across Essex, Southend-on-Sea, and Thurrock.

The three providers confirmed to be delivering the programme in Essex are:

- Shaw Trust
- Essex Cares Limited (ECL)
- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT)

From one-to-one coaching and skills training to job-matching services, the programme is designed to give people the confidence and opportunities they need to secure meaningful, sustainable work.

Councillor Tony Ball, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said: "We're proud to be delivering the Connect to Work programme in Essex and it's hugely exciting to have all three of our fantastic, expert providers now on board to support residents.

"Connect to Work will help thousands of people across Greater Essex to re-enter the workplace over the next five years, supporting those with complex barriers to employment to find good jobs.

"The programme is about employment, but also inclusion and spreading opportunity, helping residents of Greater Essex to fulfil their potential."

Shaw Trust is a leading employment charity which helps people who face barriers to work to achieve their full potential.

Richard Clifton, Shaw Trust Chief Commercial Officer, said: "As an employment charity, we want everyone – regardless of their background or circumstances – to find good work.

"All too often, people with disabilities and health conditions are at a disadvantage. In Essex, the latest census showed that 70,000 people have poor health, and more than double that figure have a disability. On top of

that, there are fewer jobs to go round, with a jobs rate that's below England's average. We're determined to help people find a way forwards.

"Over the next five years, we're aiming to support 7,800 people across Greater Essex into work. Through accessing the right health and employment support at the right time, we can help residents find lasting, meaningful jobs that fit around their needs."

ECL supports people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties, or neurodivergence overcome barriers to work. Its supported employment services are available across Greater Essex.

Peter Fairley, ECL Managing Director, said: "ECL's mission is to make a positive difference to people's quality of life through its services. The Connect to Work programme mirrors this, which is why we are thrilled to be a part of the project.

"Empowering people to be as independent as possible by supporting them to achieve their goals is what we do best. Our Supported Employment service is well positioned to help those in the Connect to Work programme having already helped hundreds of people with learning disabilities and autism achieve their ambitions of paid work in Essex.

"By offering tailored guidance, workplace training, and ongoing support to both job candidates and employers our experienced job coaches deliver outcomes that last."

EPUT provides community health, mental health and learning disability services for more than 100,000 patients at any one time.

James Sawtell, Associate Director of Social Care at EPUT, said: "Our employment specialists have been supporting people with mental health conditions to find or retain employment for many years and we're delighted to be part of Connect to Work to help even more people. We know how being in good quality employment can have so many positive impacts on a person's health.

"We work with our clients to build their confidence and find good quality and fulfilling employment, where they can use their skills and talents, and also build important social connections to reduce feelings of isolation."

EPUT has been part of Essex's Connect to Work programme since August 2025 and has already started supporting 190 people with long term mental or physical health conditions.

Find out more and get involved in Connect to Work today at:
https://www.essexopportunities.co.uk/connect-to-work/.

Connect to Work is also open to employers across Greater Essex, helping them build more inclusive workforces and access motivated, job-ready candidates.

Martin

Cllr Martin Foley

APPENDIX B

PARISH COUNCIL –February 2026

District Councillor's Report

This report is essentially an update of the January report. At the time of writing we still await some of the more significant outcomes of the Council year (such as the budget) and more detail will be available next month.

Local Plan

The inspectors' report has now been received by the Council and, subject to their proposed 'Main Modifications' they consider it to be sound. It will therefore be put to an Extraordinary Full Council meeting for adoption on 25th March. The Main Modifications were consulted on and do not fundamentally change the bulk of the Plan. They relate to the inclusion of a provision for an early review of housing land supply and detail regarding some of the allocations. It is probably fair to say that there is nothing of significance as far as the Thaxted and Eastons ward is concerned but because of the vagueness of the Plan generally, Neighbourhood Plans will become increasingly important in the determination of specific applications, particularly in relation to heritage and landscape. Prior to adoption a certain amount of weight can now be given to it in the determination of current planning applications.

As a general comment I have to say that the Plan is not ideal. Policies have not always been based on sound evidence and protections for the local environment are vague or missing. This is made more concerning given the proposed changes to the NPPF now being consulted on and clearly designed to make things easier for developers. Similarly, the consequences associated with some of the allocations are very poorly considered such as the employment allocation to the north of Taylors Farm in Takeley Street. It is undeniable however, that having a new Local Plan will assist considerably in the determination of planning applications, particularly the unwanted ones.

Stansted Airport

The Stansted application came to the December committee and was approved. Whilst it involved a small amount of physical development (the extension of taxiways) the principal issue was the increase in passenger numbers from 43m per annum to 51m. It is unlikely that these numbers will be reached until 2040 and will be based on the progressive introduction of larger (and supposedly quieter) aircraft. I voted for refusal on the basis of traffic generation and highways issues but also the fact that while the application was predicated on the basis that passenger numbers would only increase through the use of larger aircraft, no evidence was supplied to confirm what was being said but which seemed highly unlikely, that these larger jets would, in fact, be quieter.

Local Government Reform

As you will know, Uttlesford backed the five unitary scheme for the future shape of Essex. This would see Uttlesford merge with Harlow and Epping Forest to create a West Essex authority. ECC were promoting an alternative arrangement essentially dividing the county horizontally whereby Uttlesford would merge with Braintree, Colchester and Tendring. Two further options were considered, one promoted by Rochford, the other by Thurrock both of which were (perhaps too readily) dismissed by UDC. The government's decision and details of the process will be announced with their Structural Changes Order due next month. We will then know the boundaries of our new Unitary Authority (the betting is that the ECC proposal will win out which would see us lumped in with everything along the A120 corridor). It is however, anticipated that there would have to be a district office somewhere in the north west corner of the District. Considerable uncertainty about the future arrangement and the process remains for the present which does not help with day to day planning and administration, staffing and budgets. We were told that the Mayoral elections would be on 1st May but that has already been put back a year. Shadow elections were also due to take place (but no one seems to know what that might entail) with a transition period from May 2027 to March 2028 but how that

will work is anyone's guess. 1ST April 2028 is set as vesting day for the new authorities. County Council elections are still planned to go ahead this year and Martin will be standing again.

Climate Emergency

Uttlesford, along with most local authorities, declared a 'climate emergency' back in 2019 which was all a bit meaningless given that the UK is responsible for less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions while China and India go on destroying the planet. A target was set for UDC to achieve net zero carbon status by 2030. This was reviewed at Scrutiny Committee recently and there seems to be a view now that this is just not achievable. The cost of necessary works to the housing stock is too great and an electric bin lorry was trialled but ran out of charge in Great Chesterford and had to be towed home. It is worth noting though, that there is still £216,000 available for Zero Carbon Community grants.

There has been a significant recent development which you will no doubt have read about in the local paper. One of the key pillars of UDC's green agenda was the decarbonisation of the London Road offices (heat pumps and a few solar panels). A government grant of £626,000 was secured and UDC were to contribute £90,000. When tenders were received however, the project cost had risen dramatically to £1.343 million and the cost to UDC, including interest on the 15 year loan required, was in the order of £950,000. It appeared from the Cabinet papers that this was about to be waved through which was clearly just a mad waste of council tax payers' money given that UDC would no longer exist in a couple of years' time and the building would most likely be sold for residential conversion. I therefore requested that it be called in to Scrutiny Committee where it was considered on the 6th January). Scrutiny is a bit like the House of Lords, it cannot make or change decisions but it can send things back to Cabinet. After much debate, Scrutiny voted to remit the decision back to Cabinet but Cabinet is still intent on going ahead. Clearly, it is madness and a complete waste of council tax-payers money – a financial nonsense emanating from an evangelical green agenda.

Economic Development Mid-Year Review

An interim review has recently been undertaken of Uttlesford's economic development initiatives. The emphasis has been very much on tourism with a particular focus on supporting pubs. Grants have also been distributed based on funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

The Uttlesford Business Awards will take place at Saffron Hall in February. Nominations are being sought now.

Operational Resilience Report

A report was commissioned following the 'Bingate' fiasco and was presented to Scrutiny Committee. The aim was to consider what went wrong and how to ensure that nothing similar occurs again. So much was kept confidential however, that it provided no clear understanding of what did go wrong.

Housing Maintenance

There had been considerable concern over the efficiency of the Council's housing maintenance provision with a significant number of complaints from tenants. A new contract was agreed a few months ago with a company called Axis. It seems however that the new arrangement has not worked well and the decision has been taken to terminate the Axis contract and bring the service back in-house. A transition is now underway and we await the outcome.

Budget

Council meets on 24th February to discuss the 2006/07 budget so I will report on that next month. A major concern is the reduction in central government funding under the fair funding review which will see rural districts like Uttlesford lose out urban areas. Council tax will rise however probably by 2.99% as will council house rents. Car parking charges will also see a modest increase although there is considerable concern from local businesses over the proposed increase in season ticket costs.

Multi Agency Roadshow

This great initiative which brings together all of the community services (Fire; police; care providers; Touchpoint Foodshare; Employability; CAB; etc; will be coming to Thaxted market on 22nd May between 10.00 and 3.00 so a date for the diary.

Richard Haynes

APPENDIX C

Outline Budget 2025-2026

		Net	
	2025/26	**2025/26**	**2025/26**
	Budget	**Actual**	**Diff +/-**
	27,800	**30,443**	**2,643**
Cost Code	**Amount**	**Amount**	**Amount**
Salary	6,000	5,641.50	358.50
HMRC	1,500	854.22	645.78
Clerk Expenses	600	0.00	600.00
Training	100	45.00	55.00
Chairmans Allowance	0	0.00	0.00
Subscriptions	400	178.00	222.00
Insurance	1,200	1,072.95	127.05
Admin, Bank	200	408.00	-208.00
Audit, Legal	500	340.00	160.00
Printing & Stationery	0	32.82	-32.82
Lighting & Utilities	3,000	1,790.16	1,209.84
Play Area	750	985.00	-235.00
Parish maintenance	1,200	530.45	669.55
War Memorial	0	0.00	0.00
Grass & Trees	0	6,991.06	-6,991.06
S137 & Grants	250	271.95	-21.95
Hall Hire	150	200.00	-50.00
Capital projects	11,000	9,490.00	1,510.00
Website	950	1,449.99	-499.99
Events & Parties	0	162.34	-162.34
Professional Fees	0	0.00	0.00
Contingency	0	0.00	0.00
Local & Neighbourhood Plan	0	0.00	0.00
Reserves			
Legal costs			1,000
Elections			1,500
General Reserves			0
Earmarked - Play Area			5,000
Total	**27,800**	**30,443**	**-2,643**